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# MOLIÈRE

TRANSLATED BY

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY

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VOL. VI.

L'ÉTOURDI
LE MARIAGE FORCÉ
LE MÉDECIN MALGRÉ LUI
LA CRITIQUE DE L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES

BOSTON
ROBERTS BROTHERS
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# CONTENTS


| | Page |
|---|---|
| Introduction | 7 |
| L'Étourdi | 19 |
| (The Giddy-pate.) | |
| Le Mariage Forcé | 157 |
| (The Forced Marriage.) | |
| Le Médecin Malgré Lui | 213 |
| (The Doctor in Spite of Himself.) | |
| La Critique de l'École des Femmes | 299 |
| (Critique on The School for Wives.) | |

NOTICE
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# INTRODUCTION

"L'ÉTOURDI" — for which word there is no good natural equivalent in English; rattle-brain, giddy-pate, scatter-wit, harum-scarum, and the like, being all made words, and blunderer and marplot not translating it, although the best equivalent in this connection; the strict meaning of the French word being: one who acts without reflection. "L'Étourdi" was produced in 1653 at the close of Molière's wandering life through France. It was the first step in his dramatic career which openly proclaimed him a man of genius. Voltaire says of it: —

"This was the first play Molière gave in Paris; it is composed of several little intrigues which are somewhat independent of each other: such was the taste of the Italian and Spanish stage which had introduced itself into France.

Comedies were at that time only a tissue of singular adventures; no one had ever thought of depicting manners and customs; the theatre was not, as it should be, the representation of human life. Nothing was seen upon the stage but vile buffoons, the model of our puppet-shows; and all that was ever represented was the absurdity of these wretches, instead of ridiculing that of their masters. Good comedy, however, could not have been earlier known in France, inasmuch as society and gallantry, the sole sources of comic art, had only of late been born there. The play met with more success than 'L'Avare,' 'Le Misanthrope,' and 'Les Femmes Savantes' found later; the reason being that before the production of 'L'Étourdi' nothing better was known, and Molière's reputation had not as yet created jealousy. There was but one good comedy on the French stage, and that was Corneille's 'Le Menteur.' . . . But 'Le Menteur' is merely a translation, though it is probable that we owe Molière to that translation. It would have been impossible for the inimitable Molière to have seen the play without perceiving at once the vast superiority of its style above that of all others, and without giving himself wholly to that form of comedy."

This opinion was sound, for Molière himself justifies it in a letter to Boileau. "I owe much to 'Le Menteur,'" he says. "When it was first represented I had already a great desire to write something, but was much in doubt as to what it should be. My ideas were still confused, and that play fixed them. . . . In short, without 'Le Menteur' I should, no doubt, have composed my comedies of intrigue, 'L'Étourdi' and 'Le Dépit Amoureux,' but perhaps I might never have written 'Le Misanthrope.'"

Mr. Pepys has favored us with his opinion of "L'Étourdi," giving, incidentally, what seems to be an early and amusing instance of dramatic theft. He says: —

"My wife and I to the duke's play-house, where we saw 'The Feigned Innocence, or Sir Martin Mar-all,' a play made by my Lord Duke of Newcastle, but, as everybody says, corrected by Dryden. It is the most entire piece of mirth, a complete farce from one end to the other, that certainly ever was writ. I never laughed so in all my life, and at very good wit, not fooling."

"Sir Martin Mar-all" was translated by the Duke of Newcastle from Molière's "L'Étourdi," and was entered in the "Stationer's Register"

in the duke's name, though published in that of Dryden in 1697.[1]

According to certain commentators an adventure which befell the Comte de Grammont furnished Molière with the subject of "Le Mariage Forcé." Taillefer thus relates the anecdote: "The Comte de Grammont during his stay at the English court had fallen in love with Miss Hamilton, and their amours made some noise. He started for France, however, without bringing matters to a conclusion. The two brothers of the young lady overtook him at Dover, with the intention of forcing him to fight a duel. As soon as they saw him, they called out, 'Comte de Grammont, have you not forgotten something in London?' 'Excuse me,' replied the count, guessing their intention; 'I have forgotten to marry your sister, and I will go back with you to finish the affair.'" Saint-Simon tells the same story, adding that he "left to posterity memoirs of his life which his greatest enemies would never have dared to publish."

"Le Mariage Forcé" was first played at the Louvre in three acts, with interludes in which the king, Louis XIV., danced on the 29th of

[1] Temple Bar, 1893.

January, 1664. It was afterwards played in one act at the Palais Royal in the following February. This little play contains two scenes (those of Sganarelle with the philosophers Pancrace and Marphurius) which seem to many readers mere pitiable farce; but whoever will refer to the fanatical Aristotelianism of that day will understand that Sganarelle's blows are not given merely to make an audience laugh. Molière had another and far more important purpose; which he attained. The University of Paris, that fanatical champion of the doctrines of the sage of Stagyra, was on the point of obtaining a confirmation of a decree by the parliament of Paris dated September 5, 1624, pronouncing the penalty of death against all those who dared to deny the system which Molière has put into the mouths of Pancrace and Marphurius. The ridicule which "Le Mariage Forcé" cast upon such principles contributed no doubt to make the University suspend its action.[1]

Molière treated "Le Médecin malgré Lui" (which was first played August 9, 1866) as a piece of no consequence; but the public, which it roused to the highest pitch of hilarity, made a

[1] Charles Louandre.

great deal more of it than did its author. The only criticism ever made upon this "flimsy bit of wit," as Molière called it, was to say it was a farce. What matter, if the farce attains its end without insulting morality? Molière's fame will certainly not suffer from the definition; for even in this line he remains the master of all who preceded and of all who have followed him.[1]

"A French physician, member of the Faculty of Medicine at Lille,[2] Professor H. Folet, has lately published a little book on 'Molière and the Physician of his Times.' His object is to show that the dramatist's doctors and medical theories were not burlesques, but were based upon careful studies of the profession and practice of medicine actually in vogue in his day. Allowing for some natural exaggeration for the sake of comic effect, Molière's physicians and remedies are faithful copies of the originals before him. He was, in fact, as Professor Folet shows, carefully 'coached' by his own doctor in his famous theories of the temperaments, the four humors, the *calorique inné*, and all his other medical nonsense, as it has been held to be. The thorough-going practice of

[1] Charles Louandre.

[2] "Evening Post" of New York, 1896.

those days may be inferred from authentic records showing that Louis XIII. suffered at the hands of his physician in a single year no less than 215 prescriptions of drugs, 212 lotions, and 47 blood-lettings. The 'Journal of Louis XIV.'s Health' kept day by day for fifty-nine years, foots up a frightful number of purgatives and bleedings inflicted upon the Grand Monarch. All this goes to show that Molière's side-splitting 'Médecin malgré Lui' and the rest of his comic doctors were but realistic studies from the life."

The "Critique de l'École des Femmes" was played for the first time at the Palais Royal Theatre, June 1, 1665. "The idea of it came to me," says Molière, "after the second or third representation of my play 'L'École des Femmes.' I told it, this idea of mine, at a house where I passed the evening. A person of quality, whose wit and talent are well known, and who does me the honor to like me, found it enough to his taste to not only ask me to take it in hand, but also to take a hand in it himself. I was surprised when he showed me only two days later the whole thing executed in a manner much more gallant and witty than I could have

made it; but in it I found things far too flattering to myself, and I feared if I produced the work upon the stage I should be accused of having begged for the compliments it contained."

This person of quality was the Abbé du Buisson, who naïvely proposed to Molière to perform his own praises. The latter, fortunately, had too high a sense of what was due to literature to accept the proposal; but, inasmuch as the stir among the different coteries became rather threatening, he felt that he ought himself to take the offensive with the ever formidable weapon of ridicule. Accordingly, to defend himself by a counter-attack, he produced the "Critique de l'École des Femmes," in which, on a canvas devoid of all plot, he sketches rapidly a few personages who present a faithful picture of the coteries of his day. "This 'Critique,'" says M. Aimé-Martin, "is only a simple dialogue, but in that dialogue all is living and moving towards the end the author has in view. See with what felicity, before he begins to defend himself, he sets before us the different cabals who are leagued against him. Climène, who invents new words, and whose ears are more chaste than the rest of her body, represents in herself the whole coterie of the would-be *pré-*

*cieuses.* The marquis is a type of the coxcombs of the day who judged a play without having seen it, and gave their opinions arrogantly about matters which they could not understand. Lysidas, who will not hear of a work being judged by the pleasure it gives, but solely by its strict adherence to the rules of grammar and rhetoric, represents to the life those pedants who employ their little wits to hide their mediocrity beneath a specious show of learning and the envy that consumes them under a false humility. To these characters, marshalled here to exhibit all the passions of a coterie, Molière has taken care to oppose other characters, representing public reason and good sense, which belong to no coterie and are able in the end to crush them all. Uranie, Élise, and Dorante represent that element."

The "Critique" obtained a great success; but that very success excited still further the wrath and jealousy of Molière's adversaries, and it proved the signal for a polemic in which Molière, being placed on the defensive, defended himself with his legitimate weapon of sarcasm in "Les Femmes Savantes." Several of the characters sketched in this dialogue are developed in that play. Lysidas reappears

dually as Trissotin and Vadius; Climène foreshadows Philaminte, as Dorante does Clitandre, and Élise Henriette. It is not surprising that Molière persisted with relish in returning to the same field three times, for, in attacking pedants and prudes, their affected sentiments, and (as La Bruyère said) their "deformed pronunciations," he defended his own work, the victory of which was inseparable from that of good taste and good sense.

# L'ÉTOURDI

(The Giddy-pate)

Comedy

IN FIVE ACTS

# PERSONAGES

| | |
|---|---|
| Lélie | *Son of Pandolfe.* |
| Célie | *Slave of Trufaldin.* |
| Mascarille | *Valet to Lélie.* |
| Hippolyte | *Daughter of Anselme.* |
| Anselme | *Father of Hippolyte.* |
| Trufaldin | *An old man.* |
| Pandolfe | *Father of Lélie.* |
| Léandre | *A young blood.* |
| Andrès | *A rough gypsy.* |
| Ergaste | *Friend of Mascarille.* |

A Courier.

Two Troupes of Masks.

The scene is at Messina.

# L'ÉTOURDI

## Act First

### SCENE FIRST

LÉLIE, *alone.*

HA, ha! Léandre, ha, ha! there'll be a struggle; we 'll now see which of us two can win the day, and which, in our devotion to this young miracle, can put most hindrance to a rival's love. Prepare your efforts; defend yourself, I say. Be sure of one thing, I shall spare no pains.

### SCENE SECOND

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

LÉLIE.

Ah, Mascarille!

MASCARILLE.

What now?

LÉLIE.

A pretty state of things! Such thwarting of my passion! Léandre loves Célie, and, by a stroke of fate, in spite of my change of mind, is still my rival.

MASCARILLE.

Léandre loves Célie?

LÉLIE.

I tell you he adores her.

MASCARILLE.

So much the worse.

LÉLIE.

Of course it *is* so much the worse; that's what disturbs me. However, I must not despair. I have your help, and that should reassure me; I know your brain, so fertile of intrigues, has never yet found anything too difficult. One might truly call you king of valets, and there is not, in all the earth —

MASCARILLE.

A truce to flattery. When we are needed, we poor fellows, ho! we are very dear! incomparable! At other times, let things go wrong, and we are the rascals who get all the blows.

LÉLIE.

I' faith, you do me wrong by that invective. But let us talk now of my sweet young love. Tell me if any hard and cruel soul could be impenetrable to charms like hers. As for myself, I find in her discourse, as in her features, the signs of noble birth, and I believe that Heaven in lowly rank conceals her origin, and will some day disclose —

MASCARILLE.

Oh, you are so romantic with your fancies! But what will Pandolfe do in this affair? He is, at least he says he is, your father; you know his bile turns sour at times, and if your goings-on fly in his face he blusters at you finely. He is now in treaty, as we know, with Anselme, that you wed Hippolyte, the old man's daughter; believing that in marriage alone is something that may serve to keep you steady. If he should come to know that you, slighting his choice, are under bondage to an unknown woman, and that the fatal power of that mad love makes you forget the duty of obedience, God knows the tempest that will burst upon you, and the fine sermons you will then enjoy!

LÉLIE.

Oh! stop your rhetoric, I beg of you.

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MASCARILLE.

Stop you your conduct; 't is not safe, I tell you, and you should try —

LÉLIE.

Don't you know yet that you gain nothing by provoking me? A preaching valet spoils his own affairs; advice will get no salary from me.

MASCARILLE, *aside.*

He 's much provoked. (*Aloud*) All that I said was meant in jest to sound your mind. Have I the cut of one who makes himself a censor of enjoyment? Is Mascarille an enemy of nature? You know the contrary, for, 't is very certain, I might be taxed with too much human nature. Go on, by all means! laugh at the sermons of that old dotard father; push on your nag, I say, and let things drive! 'T is my belief, i' faith, that these old peevish libertines din us with warnings because, forsooth! being virtuous of necessity, they enviously hope to take from youth the joys of life. You know my talents; I offer myself wholly to your service.

LÉLIE.

Ah! that 's the talk that does delight me. As for the rest, my love, when I began to make

it known, was not ill welcomed by the eyes that caused it. But Léandre has this moment openly declared he is about to snatch my Célie from me. That 's why I say, make haste; search in your brain the quickest means to clinch my conquest; find snares, wiles, tricks, inventions of all kinds to frustrate the proceedings of my rival.

Mascarille.

Let me have time to think it over. (*Aside*) What can I now invent for this important stroke?

Lélie.

Well! your stratagem?

Mascarille.

Oh, what a hurry you are in! my brain takes measured steps. I have thought of something! You must — No, I 'm wrong. But if you were to go —

Lélie.

Where?

Mascarille.

The trick 's too weak; I was thinking of —

Lélie.

What?

MASCARILLE.

No, *that* would n't do. But could you? —

LÉLIE.

How?

MASCARILLE.

No, you could n't. But you might speak to Anselme.

LÉLIE.

What could I say to him?

MASCARILLE.

True; we should only tumble from bad to worse. Let us go see Trufaldin.

LÉLIE.

What can we do with *him*?

MASCARILLE.

I don't know.

LÉLIE.

I can't stand this; you put me out of temper with such frivolous talk.

MASCARILLE.

Monsieur, if your pockets were full of pistoles we should not have to think so much, or hunt for shifts to get our ends; you might, by the prompt purchase of this slave, defeat the rival

who now thwarts and braves you. Trufaldin, in whose care she is, fears lest he be not paid by the gypsies who have placed her with him. I know that he would gladly sell her to get the money for which they make him wait. He has always been a scurvy knave: he 'd take a flogging to earn a quarter-crown; money is the God he worships. But the trouble is —

Lélie.

What?

Mascarille.

That your father is another hunks who will not let you, as you wish, handle his ducats; and I see no secret spring which, for your aid, could open other purses. But let us try to speak with Célie for a moment, and learn the opinion which she has of this. Here is her window.

Lélie.

But old Trufaldin keeps such watch upon her day and night. Take care! take care!

Mascarille.

We are safe in this dark corner. Oh, what luck! here she comes now, most opportunely.

## SCENE THIRD

Célie, Lélie, Mascarille

Lélie.

Ah! how Heaven delights me by offering to my gaze the celestial charms with which it has provided you! No matter what piercing pain your eyes may cause me, the joy I feel in seeing their approach makes up for all.

Célie.

My heart, which your remarks surprise, not without reason, has no desire that those eyes should harm another; and if in any way they have distressed you, I do assure you 't was without my leave.

Lélie.

Ah! their glance is far too beautiful to harm me. It is my pride to treasure the wounds they give, and —

Mascarille.

The tone you take is too high-flown; that style is not the thing we want just now. We should profit better by the passing moment and make her tell us quickly if —

Trufaldin, *in the house.*

Célie!

Mascarille, *to Lélie.*

There! I told you so.

Lélie.

Oh, luckless meeting! That miserable old man was born to trouble us.

Mascarille.

Please step aside and let me speak with him.

## SCENE FOURTH

Trufaldin, Célie, Mascarille, Lélie, *in a corner*

Trufaldin, *to Célie.*

What are you doing out? What fancy pricks you, — you, whom I ordered not to speak to any one.

Célie.

I knew this worthy youth in former days; you have no cause to be suspicious of him.

Mascarille.

Is this the Seigneur Trufaldin?

Célie.

Himself.

MASCARILLE.

Monsieur, I am wholly yours; my joy is great to be allowed to bow in all humility to a man whose name is lauded everywhere.

TRUFALDIN.

Your humble servant.

MASCARILLE.

Perhaps I incommode you; but I have seen this young girl elsewhere, and being told of her great talent in telling fortunes I have come to consult her on a certain point.

TRUFALDIN, *to Célie.*

What! do you dabble in such deviltry?

CÉLIE.

No; all that I know is mere white magic.

MASCARILLE, *to Célie.*

Here is the point. The master whom I serve is languishing with love for one who holds him in her fetters. He would let fire consume him if only he could speak with the fair maiden he adores. But a dragon, watching this rare treasure, does not allow him — do what he will — to reach her. And what disturbs and makes him yet more wretched is that he finds he has a

formidable rival. So, in order that he may know if his amorous devotion has ground to hope for ultimate success, I have come hither to consult you, certain that from *your* lips I can learn the truth of the secret that concerns us.

Célie.

Under what star did your master first see light?

Mascarille.

Under a star that does not suffer him to change in love.

Célie.

Though you do not disclose the name of her to whom his heart aspires, my science enables me to know her. The girl has heart; and in adversity she can maintain a noble pride. Her nature is not one that easily makes known the secret feelings that her heart contains; but, as I know them well I will, in gentler spirit and with fewest words, unveil them to you.

Mascarille.

Oh, marvellous power of magic virtue!

Célie.

If your master boasts himself of constancy, and virtue alone inspires his plan, let him not

fear to sigh in vain. He has good cause to hope; the fort he seeks to take will not be deaf to parley and is willing to capitulate.

MASCARILLE.

That is much indeed! but the fort depends upon a governor, and he, alas! is difficult to win.

CÉLIE.

There 's the whole trouble —

MASCARILLE, *aside and looking at Trufaldin.*

The devil take that bore who stands there spying.

CÉLIE.

But I will tell you what you ought to do.

LÉLIE, *advancing.*

Trufaldin, cease to feel uneasy: 't was by my order that he came to visit you; I sent him as my faithful servant, to offer you my service and speak about this damsel. I wish to buy her of you shortly, in case we can agree upon the price.

MASCARILLE, *aside.*

Oh, hang that fool!

TRUFALDIN.

Ho, ho! which of the two shall I believe? this new discourse is highly contradictory of the other.

MASCARILLE.

Monsieur, this worthy man is slightly crazy; did you not know it?

TRUFALDIN.

I know what I know; and I think there 's some intrigue beneath all this. (*To Célie*) Go in; and never again do you take such license. And you, you arrant knaves, either I 'm much mistaken or you have tuned your flutes together to deceive me.

## SCENE FIFTH

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

MASCARILLE.

Well done! I wish he had taken a stick and set upon us! Why did you show yourself, and, like the giddy-pate you are, come out and give the lie to what I said?

LÉLIE.

I thought that I did well.

MASCARILLE.

Oh, yes! you thought indeed! However, why should I feel surprised? You are so fertile in such ill-timed actions that folks have ceased to wonder at your flighty mind.

LÉLIE.

Good heavens! just for a nothing I'm thought guilty! The harm I have done is not irreparable. Now, if you can't put Célie in my arms, you can at least be thinking how to balk the schemes of Léandre. Don't let him buy my beauty before I get her. And now for fear my presence should do further mischief, I will leave you.

MASCARILLE, *alone.*

A good thing, too. Money would be the best and surest agent in this affair, but lacking that, I must needs use another.

## SCENE SIXTH

ANSELME, MASCARILLE

ANSELME.

By the Lord! what a strange age is ours! I am puzzled by it. Never before such love of wealth, and never such work to keep it! The debts of these days, spite of every care, are just like children — conceived in joy and brought to birth in pain. Gold enters purses pleasantly enough, but when the time comes round to hand it over the pains begin to

gripe. However, 't is no small matter that two thousand francs, due for two years, be paid to me at last. I call that luck.

Mascarille, *aside.*

Heavens! here 's game! I 'll shoot it on the wing. Stop! let me think how best to wheedle him. Ha! I know the talk with which to rock his cradle. (*Aloud*) Anselme, I have just seen —

Anselme.

Whom?

Mascarille.

Your Nérine.

Anselme.

And what did she say of me, the killing beauty?

Mascarille.

She is all a-flame about you.

Anselme.

She?

Mascarille.

She loves you much; it is quite pitiful.

Anselme.

How glad you make me!

MASCARILLE.

Ah! but the poor young thing may die of it: "Anselme, dear love," she is crying all the time, "oh, when shall wedlock join our hearts? when will you deign to soothe my passion?"

ANSELME.

But why, if that be so, has she concealed it? I' faith, these girls are so dissimulating! Mascarille, what think you? Tell me, have I, though old, a figure still to please their eyes?

MASCARILLE.

Yes, truly; and your face wears well; if 't is not handsome, it is most agreeable.

ANSELME.

So that you think — ?

MASCARILLE, *trying to filch the purse.*

I think she is quite beside herself with love, and looks upon you —

ANSELME.

How?

MASCARILLE.

Already as her husband, and she longs —

ANSELME.

She longs?

Mascarille.

Longs, no matter what may happen, to press her —

Anselme.

What?

Mascarille, *taking the purse and dropping it gently on the ground.*

Her lips to yours.

Anselme.

Ah!. may it indeed be so! When next you see her praise up my merits to her all you can.

Mascarille.

Let me alone for that!

Anselme, *going away.*

Adieu.

Mascarille.

May heaven conduct you!

Anselme, *returning.*

Ah! truly, I was most forgetful; you might accuse me justly of great coldness. I asked you to assist my amorous hopes, I gather from your lips the best of news, and yet I give your zeal no recompense. But here —

MASCARILLE.

Ah! no, I beg of you.

ANSELME.

Allow me —

MASCARILLE.

No, no, I am not acting from self-interest.

ANSELME.

I know it; but still —

MASCARILLE.

No, Anselme, no, I say. I am a man of honor, and you displease me.

ANSELME.

Adieu then, Mascarille.

MASCARILLE, *aside.*

Oh, what a talker!

ANSELME, *returning.*

I want to send by you a little present to my Nérine, and I will give you now the money to buy a ring, or any trifle that you think may please her.

MASCARILLE.

No, no; don't give me money now. I'll make the present for you; I have a ring that 's

quite the mode; I 'll give her that, and if she likes it you can pay me later.

ANSELME.

So be it. Give it in my name. Be sure you keep her still inclined to long for me.

## SCENE SEVENTH

LÉLIE, ANSELME, MASCARILLE

LÉLIE, *picking up the purse.*

Whose purse is this?

ANSELME.

Ye gods! I must have dropped it. I should have always thought that some one stole it. I am very grateful for your kindness, which saves me trouble and returns my money. I will take it home at once. Adieu.

## SCENE EIGHTH

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

MASCARILLE.

Meddler! it is too much! I shall die of this!

Lélie.

'Faith! if it were not for me, he would have lost that money.

Mascarille.

Well, you have done it now! you have thrown away a piece of rare good luck and judgment. Ah! we shall get on finely if you keep up at this rate!

Lélie.

But what have I done now?

Mascarille.

You have played the fool, in good plain French, since I must say it, and I ought to. You know the want of money in which your father leaves you, you fear the rival who is at your heels, and yet, when I attempt a stroke to help you — a stroke of which I run the shame and danger all alone —

Lélie.

What? was it —?

Mascarille.

Yes, you blunderhead! 'T was for your captive maid I filched the money of which your meddling care deprives us.

Lélie.

If that is so, I'm certainly to blame; but how could I have guessed it?

Mascarille.

It needed, truly, so much shrewdness!

Lélie.

You might have given me a warning sign.

Mascarille.

Yes, carry a lantern on my back, of course! O Jupiter! say no more; spare me such foolish talk. Any other man but me would drop the whole affair, but I've prepared so masterly a stroke I want to see the full effect of it; and so, if —

Lélie.

Well, I promise you I will not meddle again, or say a word.

Mascarille.

Do go away; the sight of you excites my anger.

Lélie.

Yes, but make haste, for fear that your design —

MASCARILLE.

Go, go, I say; I must put it now in hand. (*Lélie departs.*) I 'll carry out the project; the trick is fine, if it succeeds, as I believe it will. Ha! here 's the very man I want.

## SCENE NINTH

PANDOLFE, MASCARILLE

PANDOLFE.

Mascarille!

MASCARILLE.

Monsieur!

PANDOLFE.

I am not, to speak quite frankly, pleased with my son.

MASCARILLE.

My master? You are not the only one to grumble at him. His conduct puts me out of patience all the time; 't is insupportable.

PANDOLFE.

And yet I thought you led each other on.

MASCARILLE.

Oh! monsieur, no; give up that thought. I am always trying to warn him of his duties, and picking bones with him for this and that. Just

this very day we have quarrelled about this marriage to Hippolyte — against which he rebels. He means to show you filial disrespect by the indignity of criminal refusal.

Pandolfe.

Quarrelled, have you?

Mascarille.

Yes, quarrelled — and badly, too.

Pandolfe.

Then I was much mistaken; I thought that you supported all he did.

Mascarille.

I, monsieur? See what the world is now-a-days! how innocence is always misconceived! If my integrity were known to you you would think my wages as a valet far too little, you would pay me as a tutor. Yes, you yourself could not say more to him than I have said already to keep him steady. "In God's name, monsieur," do I often say, "cease to be blown about by every wind. Reform your ways. Look at that honest man, the worthy father whom Heaven has given you, cease to wound his heart, and live, as he does, like a man of honor."

PANDOLFE.

That 's talking as you ought. What did he answer?

MASCARILLE.

Answer? Mere nonsense, just to silence me. 'T is not that in his heart he lacks the seeds of honor he derives from you, but reason is not yet his master. If I might speak with freedom, I could tell you how he might be made submissive without effort.

PANDOLFE.

Speak out.

MASCARILLE.

It is a secret; and it would be disastrous to my interests if it were known I told it. Still, in your prudence I 'll confide with all assurance.

PANDOLFE.

Yes, you can safely do so.

MASCARILLE.

Know, then, that all your dearest wishes are thwarted by the love with which a slave inspires him.

PANDOLFE.

I had heard of that already; but to hear it from your lips affects me sadly.

MASCARILLE.

You see, I am his secret confidant.

PANDOLFE.

I am truly glad of that.

MASCARILLE.

You wish, of course, to bring him back to duty without a public fuss? You therefore must — But I am so afraid he may surprise us; 't would be all up with me if he once knew I told you — You must, I say, to stop this course of things, buy this young slave-girl secretly, and send her to some other country. Anselme is intimate with Trufaldin. Send him, this very morning, to buy her for you; and, after that, if you will place her in my hands, I know the merchants, and I can promise you to get from them the price you pay; and they will take her, in spite of all his efforts, to foreign parts. For, if you wish to break him in to marriage, we must nip this dawning passion in the bud; and what is more, should he resolve to bear the yoke you put upon him, this first-loved object, if he sees her here, may once more wake his fancy and do injury to the wife.

PANDOLFE.

That is well-reasoned, and your counsel suits me. I will see Anselme instantly and make an effort to promptly own this fatal slave, and place her in your hands to do the rest.

MASCARILLE, *alone.*

Good! Now I 'll go warn my master of all this. Long life to knavery, and to knaves themselves!

## SCENE TENTH

HIPPOLYTE, MASCARILLE

HIPPOLYTE.

Traitor! and is it thus you do me service? I have heard all; I see your artfulness. Without this proof how could I have suspected it? You are steeped in lies, and practise them on me. Did you not promise that you would help my passion for Léandre; and from the choice of Lélie, to which they would constrain me, your cleverness and care should set me free? You said that you would save me from my father's project, and here you are, engaged in just the contrary! But you will find yourself defeated;

I know a means to stop that purchase which you think to make, and I shall now —

Mascarille.

Ha! you are quick as if a gnat had stung you; and without reflecting whether or not you have any cause your mind attacks me like a little demon. And yet I 'm wrong; I ought, before I do the deed, to tell you just the truth, since you insult me thus.

Hippolyte.

By what delusion do you think to blind me? Can you deny what my own ears have heard?

Mascarille.

No. But you must know this very trick is meant to do you service; that sly advice, which seemed to be so guileless, will cast into my snare the two old men. I want to get young Célie from their hands to put her in those of Lélie, and manage by this contrivance that your father, rebuffed by his intended son-in-law, shall turn his choice on Léandre.

Hippolyte.

What! by this grand project which so roused my anger, you meant to help me, Mascarille?

MASCARILLE.

Yes, you. But since you recognize so ill my services, and force me to endure such sharp rebukes — calling me in haughty tones a knave! a caitiff! an impostor! — I shall repair the error I 've committed, and put an end at once to my late enterprise.

HIPPOLYTE, *stopping him.*

Ah! do not treat me so unkindly; forgive the hasty impulse of a moment.

MASCARILLE.

No, no; let me alone; there still is time to stop the trick you take so ill. You shall not blame me henceforth for my efforts. Oh! you shall have my master — *that* I promise you.

HIPPOLYTE.

But my poor Mascarille, do cease such anger. I judged you ill; I did you wrong, and I confess it. (*Taking out her purse.*) Let me repair my fault with this. I 'm sure you can't resolve to leave me thus.

MASCARILLE.

No; you are right, I cannot do so, however much I try. Still, this sudden change on your

part comes with ill grace. Learn this: that nothing wounds a noble heart so much as a mere slur upon its honor.

HIPPOLYTE.

'T is true I said insulting things; but these two louis will surely cure the wound.

MASCARILLE.

No, no; I am so sensitive to blame. Still, we should bear with friends; already I feel my anger slacken.

HIPPOLYTE.

Think you that we shall gain our ends? Will the result of your bold schemes bring to my love the future that you promised?

MASCARILLE.

You need not be on thorns for that. I keep, all ready, divers schemes on hand; and if, by chance, this stratagem should fail to do the thing we wish, another will succeed in doing it.

HIPPOLYTE.

Believe that I, at least, will never be ungrateful.

MASCARILLE.

'T is not the hope of gain that moves me.

HIPPOLYTE.

I see your master making signs; he wants to speak with you. I leave you now; remember that I trust you to do well by me.

## SCENE ELEVENTH

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

LÉLIE.

What the devil are you about? You promise me fine things, but the slowness with which you act is to my ardor quite intolerable. If my good genius had not led me on, my happiness would now be overthrown, my comfort at an end, my joy all gone; eternal grief would be my portion. In other words, if I 'd not chanced to come in time, Anselme would just have bought the slave and all my hopes been frustrated. He was about to take her with him, but I prevented it; I warded off the blow, and with such vehemence that poor Trufaldin, out of fear, retained her.

MASCARILLE.

That 's three; when it comes to ten I 'll mark a cross and pay the score. Oh, brain incurable! 't was through my wiles that Anselme

made that purchase; he was to place her in my hands; and now your devilish folly has torn her from us! Do you think I'll help your love again? I'd rather be a blockhead ten times over, a booby, cabbage, nincompoop, a hound, and let old Satan wring your neck!

LÉLIE, *alone.*

I shall have to take him to some hostelry and let him spend his fury in his cups.

END OF FIRST ACT.

## Act Second

### SCENE FIRST

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

MASCARILLE.

I AM forced to give in to your wishes; in spite of all my oaths I cannot help it; and in your interests (which I'd fain be rid of) I've saddled myself now with other perils. I am just so easy! Ha! if Dame Nature had only made poor Mascarille a girl, I leave you to suppose how things would be. Still, don't you go, on this assurance, and put your spoke in this new scheme; none of your blunders, mind you, that dash my efforts. I think we can explain your act to Anselme and still obtain the thing that we desire. But if your heedless folly breaks out again, good-bye, I tell you, to my help.

LÉLIE.

No, I'll be prudent; *that* I'll promise you; fear nothing; you shall see —

MASCARILLE.

Bear it in mind. I have begun already a bold stratagem. Your father shows excessive

laziness in rendering by his death your life content, and so I 've killed him — in words, I mean; I 've spread the rumor that an apoplexy has, of a sudden, carried the goodman off. But first, the better to feign news of his decease, I enticed him to his farm, by sending word that the workmen employed upon his buildings had found a treasure among the walls. Ha! he flew; and as the whole household, barring you and I, accompanied him, I shall have time to kill him in the minds of all, and to produce a ghost for burial. I have already told you what you have to do. Play your part well; and as for me, if you perceive I 've missed a single word in mine, I give you leave to say I am a fool.

## SCENE SECOND

LÉLIE, *alone.*

His wits, I must say, find odd means to crown my hopes with joy. But when a man's in love with so much beauty what won't he do to make him happy? If love may be a fair excuse for crime, I surely may employ this little trick its ardor forces on me, in view of all the sweetness it will bring — Good heavens! how quick they

are! I see them coming. Let me prepare to play my part.

## SCENE THIRD

ANSELME, MASCARILLE

MASCARILLE.

The news may well surprise you.

ANSELME.

Dead! in so sudden a way!

MASCARILLE.

A great blow, truly; I dislike such shocks.

ANSELME.

Not even time to have an illness!

MASCARILLE.

No; never man was in such haste to die.

ANSELME.

And Lélie?

MASCARILLE.

He beats his breast, and cannot bear his sorrow; he is bruised all over with contusions, and longs, he says, to follow his father to the grave.

In fact, his grief is so excessive that I 'm in haste to bury the corpse, fearing the sight, which makes him almost maniacal, may cause some horrid shock to tear him from us.

Anselme.

Still, you must wait until this evening. Besides the fact that others will wish to see the body, such rapid burials prove often murderous; a man is sometimes thought to be deceased when he has only the appearance of it.

Mascarille.

I 'll guarantee him dead as need be. But to return to what we said; Lélie desires (and I think the action may be salutary) — Lélie desires to honor his father by a handsome funeral, and so console the poor defunct by the pleasure of seeing such honors rendered to his death. Lélie inherits a large fortune; but as in such affairs he 's rather new, and the property is not in these parts, and what there is consists of papers, he wishes me to ask you — offering his excuses for his violence this morning — to lend him enough to pay these last sad duties.

Anselme.

You have said enough: I 'll go to him at once.

MASCARILLE, *alone.*

So far so good, and nothing could be better. Now let us strive to make the rest respond to this beginning; and, lest the ship be wrecked in port, I 'll guide the helm myself by hand and eye.

## SCENE FOURTH

ANSELME, LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

ANSELME.

Let us go out; I cannot, without deep sorrow, behold him shrouded in that painful way. Alas! to go in this short time! He lived this morning!

MASCARILLE.

Sometimes it takes but little time to go a mighty distance.

LÉLIE, *weeping.*

Ah!

ANSELME.

Alas! dear Lélie, 'tis the fate of man. Rome cannot give a dispensation against death.

LÉLIE.

Ah!

ANSELME.

It strikes down all mankind without a warning; 'tis watching at all hours to do us harm.

LÉLIE.

Ah!

ANSELME.

Death, like a cruel beast, in spite of prayers, will not forego one craunch of its murderous jaws. All the world passes through them.

LÉLIE.

Ah!

MASCARILLE.

No use to preach; his grief is too deep rooted.

ANSELME.

If, in spite of all such reasoning, your sadness, my dear Lélie, still continues, you must strive, at least, to moderate it.

LÉLIE.

Ah!

MASCARILLE.

He cannot do so; I know his nature well.

ANSELME.

And now, informed on this point by your servant, I have brought the money which you need to celebrate your father's obsequies; and here it is.

LÉLIE.

Ah! ah!

MASCARILLE.

How that sad word augments his grief! He cannot, without horror, think of that moment.

ANSELME.

In the papers of your good father you will find that I am his debtor for a larger sum. But even if I owed you nothing, you could dispose most freely of my purse. Believe me, I am wholly yours, and I will show it.

LÉLIE, *going away.*

Ah!

MASCARILLE.

Oh! the great sorrow of my master!

ANSELME.

But, Mascarille, I think it would be well that he should write me out a brief receipt.

MASCARILLE.

Oh!

ANSELME.

The uncertainties of life are great.

MASCARILLE.

Oh!

ANSELME.

Please make him sign the note that I require.

Mascarille.

Alas! how can I do so in the state he 's in? Pray give him time to cast his sadness off. As soon as some relief comes to his pain I will take care to make him sign your paper. Adieu; my heart is swollen with grief, and I must go to weep my fill with him. Ah!

Anselme, *alone.*

The world is full of anguish; each man daily feels his own distress; and never, here below —

## SCENE FIFTH

Pandolfe, Anselme

Anselme.

Ah! good God! I shudder! Pandolfe returning! Could he not sleep in peace? Is his soul troubled? How shrunken his face has grown since death! Ah! do not come too near, I beg of you! I have a deep repugnance to rub shoulders with a corpse.

Pandolfe.

What means this odd excitement?

Anselme.

Tell me — from a distance — what brings you here. If 't is to say farewell, the courtesy is

great, but I would fain have done without the compliment. Is your soul in torment, and you seek our prayers? If so, I promise them at once, but do not terrify me. On the word of a most frightened man I will at once pray God so much that you shall be at peace. Vanish, I pray you! May Heaven in mercy crown with joy and health your departed lordship!

Pandolfe, *laughing.*

Vexed as I am, I can't help laughing.

Anselme.

Hey! for a dead man you are somewhat lively.

Pandolfe.

Is this a jest, please tell me? Or are you mad, to treat a live man as a dead one?

Anselme.

Alas! you are dead. I saw your corpse just now.

Pandolfe.

What! have I died without perceiving it?

Anselme.

As soon as Mascarille brought me the news I felt a mortal anguish in my soul.

Pandolfe.

Come, come! are you asleep? are you awake? and don't you know me?

Anselme.

You are clothed in some aërial body which counterfeits your own, and in a moment it may be another. I fear to see you grow a giant and your present face more hideous. For God's sake do not take some dreadful aspect; I am terrified enough in this conjuncture.

Pandolfe.

At any other time the simple way in which you show how credulous you are would seem to me a famous jest, and I would fain prolong the pleasure. But this fictitious death, and news that I have met upon the road, raise in my mind legitimate suspicions. Mascarille is a knave, the knave of knaves, on whom no fear and no remorse can work, — a fellow who finds strange means to carry out his schemes.

Anselme.

Can they have played a game on me? Was it a fraud? Ah! my good sense, a pretty thing for you! — I 'll touch him to make sure. Yes, it is really he! Confound the fool that I have been this day! In pity don't divulge the

tale; they 'd play a farce upon it to my shame. But, Pandolfe, help me to get back the money that I have given to bury you.

PANDOLFE.

Money, you say? Ah! that explains it; *there* is the secret knot of this affair. But as for me, I will inform myself, without too much disturbance, about the doings of this Mascarille, and if he can be caught in any crime, no matter what it costs, I 'll have him hanged.

ANSELME, *alone.*

And I — a pretty dupe to trust a rogue! I lost to-day both sense and money. Faith! what 's the good of wearing this gray head if I am still so ready to commit a folly, and trust a first report without a question? But here comes Lélie —

## SCENE SIXTH

LÉLIE, ANSELME

LÉLIE, *not seeing Anselme.*

Now with this money in my hand, I can easily pay Trufaldin a visit.

ANSELME.

By what I see, your sorrow is of short duration.

Lélie.

How can you say so? Never will it leave a heart which guards it tenderly.

Anselme.

I have returned to tell you frankly that in giving you that money I made an error; among those louis, although they seemed quite good, I slipped, without reflection, some that I know were false. I have brought others here to take their place. The intolerable audacity of our false coiners, who swarm about the State in such a way, makes it impossible to take a coin of any kind without suspicion. Heavens! such rogues should all be hanged.

Lélie.

You are very kind to wish to take them back. But I have seen no false ones, as I think, among them.

Anselme.

I know them well; produce them, let me see them. Are those all?

Lélie.

Yes.

Anselme.

Good! At last I have you safely back, beloved money; into my pocket you go! And

you, my worthy swindler, you are left without a penny. So you kill men who are alive and well? Pray, what would you have done to me, a lean old father-in-law? Faith! I was bringing to my home a most discreet and virtuous son! Go, go! and die of shame and of remorse.

Lélie, *alone*.

I am amazed! How came he to find out the trick so soon?

## SCENE SEVENTH

Lélie, Mascarille

Mascarille.

Why did you leave the house? I have been looking for you everywhere. Well, here we are, at last successful! I 'd now give odds to any knave on earth. Come, hand me the money, that I may go at once and buy the slave. Your rival will be much astonished.

Lélie.

Ah! my poor lad, our luck has turned. Who could have guessed the injustice of my fate!

Mascarille.

What! can it be —?

Lélie.

Anselme, learning our trick, has taken back the money that he lent me, under pretence of changing doubtful coins.

Mascarille.

Perhaps you are joking.

Lélie.

'T is all too true.

Mascarille.

Honestly?

Lélie.

Honestly; and I am inconsolable. You will, I know, give way to furious anger.

Mascarille.

I? nonsense! I am no such fool! Anger makes illness; and I mean to save myself, whatever happens. Let Célie, after all, be free or captive, let Léandre buy her or not — I don't care *that* about it.

Lélie.

Ah! Mascarille, don't show such hard indifference for me; be more indulgent to my small imprudence. You must admit, until this last ill-luck, that I did marvels, and showed such likely grief for that feigned death that the most

clear-sighted man on earth would have thought it true.

MASCARILLE.

Oh! you have every reason, truly, to laud yourself!

LÉLIE.

There! there! I am guilty, and I own it; but if my welfare was ever something to you, repair this blunder; help me now.

MASCARILLE.

I kiss your hands — I 've not the leisure for it.

LÉLIE.

Mascarille, my friend.

MASCARILLE.

No, no!

LÉLIE.

Do me this kindness.

MASCARILLE.

No, I will not.

LÉLIE.

If you are so inflexible, I 'll kill myself.

MASCARILLE.

So be it; you are free to do so.

LÉLIE.

Can I not melt you?

MASCARILLE.

No, you can't.

LÉLIE.

Do you see this dagger?

MASCARILLE.

Yes.

LÉLIE.

I 'll drive it in.

MASCARILLE.

Do as you like.

LÉLIE.

Will you feel no grief at tearing me from life?

MASCARILLE.

None whatever.

LÉLIE.

Then farewell, Mascarille.

MASCARILLE.

Farewell, Monsieur Lélie.

LÉLIE.

What! —

MASCARILLE.

Make haste and kill yourself. Ha! what a talk about it!

LÉLIE.

I' faith, you want me to be a fool and kill myself that you may get my clothes.

MASCARILLE.

Did n't I know that this was all put on? No matter what such minds as yours may swear to do, they are not so ready, after all, to kill themselves.

SCENE EIGHTH

TRUFALDIN, LÉANDRE, LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

(*Trufaldin speaks low to Léandre at back of stage*)

LÉLIE.

What do I see? My rival and Trufaldin here together! He 's buying Célie! Oh! I shake with fear.

MASCARILLE.

Yes, you can't doubt he 'll do it if he can, and, if he has the money, he *can* do it. For my part, I am glad. Here 's the reward of your untimely blunders and impatience.

LÉLIE.

What must I do? Tell me? Oh, do advise!

MASCARILLE.

But I don't know —

Lélie.

I know! I 'll quarrel with him.

Mascarille.

And where 's the good of that?

Lélie.

Tell me, what would you have me do to avert this evil?

Mascarille.

Well, well, I 'll pardon you and cast a pitying eye upon your troubles. Let me observe him; by some insinuating way I think I can contrive to know what he is planning.

(*Lélie goes off.*)

Trufaldin, *to Léandre as he leaves him.*

If you send presently, the matter shall be settled.

Mascarille, *aside, going away.*

I must trick Léandre somehow, and make myself the confidant of his designs in order to defeat them.

Léandre, *alone.*

Thanks to heaven my happiness is now beyond attack; I have secured her, and I fear no longer. Whate'er my rival may in future undertake, he has no power now to do me harm.

### SCENE NINTH

LÉANDRE, MASCARILLE

MASCARILLE, *speaking first within the house, and then rushing out.*

Ahi! ahi! help! help! murder! he 's killing me. Ah! ah! ah! Oh, traitor! brute!

LÉANDRE.

What is all this? Pray who 's harming you?

LÉLIE.

He has given me two hundred blows!

LÉANDRE.

But who?

MASCARILLE.

Lélie.

LÉANDRE.

Why?

MASCARILLE.

Oh! for a trifle; he has beaten me and turned me off.

LÉANDRE.

Ha! he was truly very foolish.

MASCARILLE.

But I swear hard that I 'll revenge myself — Yes, I 'll show you, flogger, whom God con-

found! I'll show you that 't is not for nothing you can beat a man unmercifully. If I *am* a valet, I 'm a man of honor too; and having had me for four years your faithful servant, you had no right to pay me with blows and insults on my back. I tell you again, I 'll be avenged. That slave you like, and whom you ordered me to purchase for you, I 'll see that some one else shall carry her off, or the devil take me!

LÉANDRE.

Mascarille, listen to me, and stop this fury. You have always pleased me, and I have often wanted a fellow like you, with brains and loyalty, to be zealous in my service. Now, if the offer pleases you, and you desire to serve me, I 'll engage you.

MASCARILLE.

Yes, monsieur, yes; and all the more that this propitious luck gives me, in serving you, a chance for vengeance, and that my very efforts to content you will bring a punishment upon that brute. In a word, Célie, through my great cleverness —

LÉANDRE.

My love has done that office for itself. Enamoured of a being without defect, I have

already bought her, and for a price far less than her deserts.

MASCARILLE.

What! is Célie yours?

LÉANDRE.

You would see her with me now if I were wholly master of my actions. But my father, alas, is that; and as he intends — at least I have just heard so in a letter — to marry me to Hippolyte, I must conceal this other matter lest it irritate him. Therefore I bargained with Trufaldin (whom I left just now) under another name; and, the purchase being made, he agrees to deliver Célie to the man who brings this ring. But I must first find means to hide from every eye that which charms mine; I must search quickly for some favorable place where I can hide this lovely captive secretly.

MASCARILLE.

Outside the town I have an old relation whose house I am free to offer you. There you can place her with all confidence, and no one will have knowledge of your actions.

LÉANDRE.

Yes, i' faith, that's just the thing I wish. Here, take the ring and fetch my beauty; the

moment that Trufaldin sees the sign he 'll place her in your hands. Then take her to the house you mention — But hush ! here 's Hippolyte upon our traces.

## SCENE TENTH

Hippolyte, Léandre, Mascarille

Hippolyte.

I have some news, Léandre, that I must tell you. I know not if you 'll think it sweet or cruel.

Léandre.

In order to judge it and reply, I must know what it is.

Hippolyte.

Give me your hand; let us go towards the temple; and as we walk along I will tell you what it is.

Léandre, *to Mascarille.*

Go; serve me at once, without delay.

### SCENE ELEVENTH

MASCARILLE, *alone.*

Yes, I 'll serve you a dish of my own concocting! Was there ever, in all this world, a luckier fellow? Oh, what joy for Lélie! his mistress tumbling into his arms in such a way! To find his luck just where he looked for ruin, and get his rapture from a rival's hand! After this rare exploit I shall insist that I be painted as a hero, with laurels on my brow; and underneath, in golden letters, they shall put: *Vivat Mascarillus fourbûm imperator!*

### SCENE TWELFTH

TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE

MASCARILLE.

Holà!

TRUFALDIN.

What do you want with me?

MASCARILLE.

This ring will tell you what I want.

TRUFALDIN.

Yes, I recognize the sign. I will go fetch the slave, while you wait here.

## SCENE THIRTEENTH

A Courier, Trufaldin, Mascarille

Courier, *to Trufaldin.*

Seigneur, pray direct me to a man —

Trufaldin.

What man?

Courier.

I think his name is Trufaldin.

Trufaldin.

What do you want with him? You see him now.

Courier.

Merely to place this letter in his hands.

Trufaldin, *reading the letter.*

"Heaven, whose goodness guides my life, has let me know, by gentle rumour, that my daughter, carried off when four years old by robbers, is living as a slave with you, under the name of Célie. If you have ever known what 't is to be a father, if you are open to the ties of blood, preserve my cherished daughter till I come, as though she were your own. I start at once to fetch her, and you may be sure that I will recompense you well; so that your happiness, which

I shall render great, will make you bless the day when you caused mine.

"From Madrid.

"Don Pedro de Gusman,
*Marquis de Montalcane.*"

(*Trufaldin continues.*) Though little faith is due to gypsies as a nation, they told me, those who sold her to me, that some one would presently acknowledge her, and I should have no cause to murmur. And yet I was about, in my impatience, to put the girl in other hands! This prevents it. I shall take all the care of her that he desires. (*The courier departs. To Mascarille.*) You have heard yourself what I have read aloud. Repeat those facts to him who sent you here, and say that now I cannot keep my word, and he must come here to withdraw his money.

Mascarille.

But this outrage which you do him —

Trufaldin.

Go, without further words.

Mascarille, *alone.*

Ha! luckless thrust of fate! a knock-down blow to hope! May evil fortune, thunder-bolts

and hail follow that man from Spain! Never, no, never did a finer dawn cloud over in a moment, so disastrously.

## SCENE FOURTEENTH

Lélie *laughing*, Mascarille

Mascarille.

Hey! what fine transport of success inspires you now?

Lélie.

Let me laugh out my fill before I tell you.

Mascarille.

Yes, yes, laugh on! we have good cause for laughter!

Lélie.

Ah! I shall be no longer the object of your grumbling. You 'll never say again, you who are always scolding, that I am the marplot of your rogueries. I have played, myself, the cleverest trick of all. 'T is true I am hasty, headlong perhaps at times; but, when I choose, I have imagination, yes, imagination as good in truth as any man alive, as you yourself will presently allow. I 've done a clever stroke few would have thought of.

MASCARILLE.

Let us hear it, this imaginative action.

LÉLIE.

Just now, my mind alarmed at seeing Trufaldin consorting with my rival, I tried to think of something that should remedy the evil. So, collecting all myself within my brain, I thereupon conceived, gestated, and produced a stratagem, before which all of yours, of which you boast so much, must now, without appeal, lower their flag.

MASCARILLE.

Yes, but what is it?

LÉLIE.

Ah! if you please, be patient. I have forged a letter very carefully, as from a Spanish signor, written to Trufaldin, informing him that having, by happy fortune, heard a slave he owns under the name of Célie is his daughter, stolen when four years old by robbers, he is on his way to fetch her, and conjures Trufaldin to keep her safe till then; assuring him that handsome gifts shall recognize his zeal, and he will not regret the joy he causes.

MASCARILLE.

Indeed!

LÉLIE.

But listen; here is something better still. The letter that I speak of was delivered, and, would you believe it? just in time! The courier tells me that without this famous trick a man would have carried her off, and he looked a fool indeed when thus defeated.

MASCARILLE.

And you played this stroke, without having sold yourself to the devil?

LÉLIE.

Yes. You would never have thought me capable, would you? of such a subtle scheme. Come, praise my cleverness and the dexterity with which I've thwarted my rival's well-concocted plan.

MASCARILLE.

No, I lack eloquence to praise you according to your deserts; my wits are few. To set forth properly this lofty effort, this noble exploit, this grand and rare effect of an imagination which yields in vigor to no living soul, my tongue is impotent. I need to have the tongues of men of choicest knowledge to tell you in fine verse or learned prose that you will ever be, what you have been through life, a mind

that 's ever wrong side out, a flighty brain that 's always revelling, a crooked judgment lacking common-sense, a marplot, blunderer, fool, a giddy-pate, and Heaven knows what else, a — something a hundred times more foolish than I say. There 's an abridgment of your panegyric.

LÉLIE.

Please tell me why you are so sharp against me. Have I done anything amiss? Enlighten me.

MASCARILLE.

No, you 've done nothing. Let me alone; don't follow me.

LÉLIE.

Yes, I shall follow you wherever you may go, until I know the meaning of this mystery.

MASCARILLE.

You will? Then trim your legs for good hard work. I 'll exercise them for you!

LÉLIE, *alone.*

There! he escapes me. Oh! ill-luck that can't be helped! How can I understand one word of all he said? What miserable harm can I have done myself?

END OF SECOND ACT.

## Act Third

### SCENE FIRST

MASCARILLE, *alone.*

SILENCE, my kindness! cease your promptings; you are a fool. No! I 'll do nothing. *You*, my wrath, are right, and I avow it. So many times to bind up that which a marplot loosens takes too much patience. I must be done with him after the splendid tricks he has aborted. But still, I 'll reason it a little, and without violence. If I follow now my just impatience they 'll say I yield to difficulty, and that my subtle shrewdness is at fault. What then becomes of public confidence, which vaunts me on all sides as a most splendid rogue — a reputation I 've acquired on so many great occasions which never found me wanting in contrivances. Honor, O Mascarille, honor is a precious thing; and your noble efforts should make no pause. No matter what a master does to infuriate you, complete your work for your own glory, not for his. But how? What will you do? Thwarted on all sides by this blunder-

ing demon, I am forced to sing a different tune a dozen times a day. 'T is beating air to strive to stop the headlong torrent of his folly, which, in a second, upsets my finest artifice. Well, well, I 'll try one other trick at least; I risk the sacrifice of this last effort upon the chances of success; and if again he breaks me up, I will deprive him, after that, of my assistance. And yet, this latest blunder may not prove an ill if, by it, we have lost a rival; and if Léandre, weary of pursuit, should leave the field clear to my new device. Yes, I 'm revolving in my mind a most ingenious scheme — which promises, I think, a glorious success if we no longer have a rival to contend with. Good! here he comes! and now I 'll see whether his passion still continues obstinate.

## SCENE SECOND

Léandre, Mascarille

Mascarille.

Monsieur, I 've lost my time; your man refuses —

Léandre.

Yes, he has told me all about it. But more than that, I know that this fine mystery, this

story of a rape by gypsies, and of a Spanish signor coming here to find his daughter, is a mere stratagem, a hoaxing trick, a fib, a tale, which Lélie has invented to stop me from buying Célie.

Mascarille.

Oh, what a rascal!

Léandre.

And yet Trufaldin is so much impressed with this fictitious tale, he swallows the bait of this weak lie so readily, that he refuses to be undeceived.

Mascarille.

If so, he 'll watch her all the more, and I see no chance of doing anything.

Léandre.

Though from the first she has seemed to me most lovable, I now have come to almost worship her; and I am doubtful whether in order to obtain her, I may not have recourse to an heroic measure, and change her bonds of slavery to those of marriage.

Mascarille.

What! you would wed her?

LÉANDRE.

I am not certain; but at least, though some obscurity attends her birth, her grace and virtue are most sweet attractions, which to win hearts have powers untold.

MASCARILLE.

Virtue! he says her virtue!

LÉANDRE.

What are you muttering to yourself? Speak out. Explain your meaning as to that word "virtue."

MASCARILLE.

Monsieur, your face is altered in a moment; perhaps I 'd better hold my tongue.

LÉANDRE.

No, no, speak out!

MASCARILLE.

Well, yes, in all true charity I think I 'm bound to remove your blindness. This girl —

LÉANDRE.

Go on.

MASCARILLE.

Is far from virtuous. She is ready to please all; her heart, believe me, is n't stone to him who guesses the right end to take it. She

plays the prim and passes for a prude, but I can speak with certainty about her; you know 't is rather my profession to keep myself informed of game like that.

Léandre.

Célie —

Mascarille.

Yes, her modesty is only a pretence, which the shadow of virtue barely covers; 't will melt, as any one who tries may know, under the golden sunshine of a purse.

Léandre.

Heavens! what mean you? Shall I believe such tales as that?

Mascarille.

Monsieur, 't is as you will; why should I care? No, believe me not; follow your wishes; take this artful girl, give her your hand, and the whole town will recognize your ardor, for you will wed in her the public property.

Léandre.

O terrible surprise!

Mascarille, *aside.*

He takes the bait! Courage! he gulps it down! and that sharp thorn is taken from our foot.

LÉANDRE.

Yes! this amazing blow has stunned me —

MASCARILLE.

What! can you still —

LÉANDRE.

Go to the post, and see if any letter has arrived for me. (*Alone, after reflecting for a time.*) Who would have failed to be deceived? If he says true, no face or manner was ever so deceptive.

SCENE THIRD

LÉLIE, LÉANDRE

LÉLIE.

Hey! Léandre, what is the purport of your grief?

LÉANDRE.

Of mine?

LÉLIE.

Yes, yours.

LÉANDRE.

I have no grief at all.

LÉLIE.

Ha! I see plainly Célie is the cause.

LÉANDRE.

My mind's not running on a thing so worthless.

LÉLIE.

And yet you had lately great designs upon her — although it must be owned they came to nought.

LÉANDRE.

If I were fool enough to cherish her caresses, I should laugh at your sly tricks.

LÉLIE.

Pray what sly tricks?

LÉANDRE.

Oh, heavens! I know all.

LÉLIE.

What do you know?

LÉANDRE.

Your late proceedings, one and all.

LÉLIE.

You are talking Hebrew; which I do not understand.

LÉANDRE.

Feign ignorance if you choose; but you may cease to fear, believe me, for a possession I

should be loath indeed to take away from you. Beauty I love where it is not profaned; I do not pant for that which is abandoned.

LÉLIE.

Gently! gently, Léandre!

LÉANDRE.

Ha! that is good! I tell you again, take her without suspecting me. You can call yourself the master of good fortunes! 'T is true her beauty is uncommon, but, in exchange, the rest is common enough.

LÉLIE.

Léandre, stop short these insolent remarks. Make all the efforts that you please against me; but silence such attacks on her. Learn that I 'm not so base as to hear slander on the woman I worship; your love is less repugnant to my soul than speeches that insult her.

LÉANDRE.

What I have told you comes on good authority.

LÉLIE.

Whoever told you is a coward and liar. No stain can be imputed to that girl. I know her heart.

LÉANDRE.

Well, it was Mascarille, a competent judge, methinks, in such a case, who thus condemned her.

LÉLIE.

He!

LÉANDRE.

Himself.

LÉLIE.

He dares to insolently slander an honorable woman? Oh! there 's some joke in this to laugh at. I 'll bet he will deny it.

LÉANDRE.

I 'll bet that he will not.

LÉLIE.

*Parbleu!* I 'll make him die beneath my stick, if he has really told such falsehoods.

LÉANDRE.

And I will cut his ears off if he does not swear to all he told me.

## SCENE FOURTH

Lélie, Léandre, Mascarille

Lélie.

Ha! good! good! he 's coming. Come here, you cursèd hound!

Mascarille.

What now?

Lélie.

Ha! serpent tongue, fruitful of lies, you dare to fasten fangs on Célie and slander the rarest virtue that ever shone beneath a crushing fate?

Mascarille, *low to Lélie.*

Hush! what I have said is in my plot.

Lélie.

No, no; no winks at me, no whisperings. I am blind to all, and deaf to what you say. Were you my brother, you should pay for this! To slur the name of her I worship is to wound my soul in its most tender spot. Your signs are all in vain. What did you tell Léandre?

Mascarille.

Good heavens! don't pick a quarrel, or I 'll run away.

Lélie, *seizing him.*

You shall not escape me!

Mascarille.

Lélie.

Speak! Confess!

Mascarille, *low to Lélie.*

Let me alone, I tell you; 't is a trick, a clever trick.

Lélie.

Make haste. What did you say? Clear up that point at once.

Mascarille, *low to Lélie.*

I said what I did say. Don't carry on in this way.

Lélie, *drawing his sword.*

Ha! I will make you sing another tune.

Léandre, *stopping him.*

Halt there! restrain the fiery wrath that so excites you.

Mascarille, *aside.*

Was there ever, in all the world, a mind that had so little sense?

Lélie.

Let me avenge my outraged love!

LÉANDRE.

No, I will not permit you to beat him in my presence.

LÉLIE.

What! not chastise my servants when they displease me?

LÉANDRE.

How, *your* servants?

MASCARILLE, *aside.*

There! he 'll betray it all.

LÉLIE.

Suppose I choose to beat him till he dies, he is my valet.

LÉANDRE.

No, he is mine.

LÉLIE.

A fine joke, truly; how is he yours? Perhaps —

MASCARILLE, *low to Lélie.*

Gently!

LÉLIE.

Hey? what 's that you are muttering?

MASCARILLE, *aside.*

Ah! twofold blockhead! he 'll spoil all. Can't he perceive the signs I 'm making to him?

LÉLIE.

You are dreaming, Léandre, or else you are fooling me. Do you mean to say that he is not my valet?

LÉANDRE.

Did you not, for some misdeed, dismiss him from your service?

LÉLIE.

I don't know what you mean.

LÉANDRE.

And with great violence thrash him, outrageously, upon his back?

LÉLIE.

Never. I, dismiss him! thrash him! Either you joke with me, Léandre, or he with you.

MASCARILLE, *aside.*

Go on, go on, you marplot! a pretty mess you make of your affairs.

LÉANDRE, *to Mascarille.*

Those blows were all imaginary, were they?

MASCARILLE.

He does n't know what he is saying; his memory —

LÉANDRE.

No, no! these signs say nothing good for you. My mind suspects you of some wily trick. But if it be so, I forgive it; 't is quite enough that Lélie undeceives me; I see your motives for this imposition, and, having trusted to your hypocritic zeal, I 'm only glad to escape so cheaply — a word to the wise is all-sufficient. Adieu, Lélie, adieu; your very humble servant.

## SCENE FIFTH

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

MASCARILLE.

Courage, my lad! All luck attends us! Out with our swords, and bravely take the field! Let 's play Olibrius, slayer of the saints!

LÉLIE.

He accused you of malicious slander against —

MASCARILLE.

And you could not see my scheme and leave him in his error, which did you service and had almost driven away his love? Oh, no! your soul 's so frank and not dissimulating! I was

about to fasten on your rival cleverly; into my hands he would have placed your mistress, and you made me miss my stroke with that forged letter. But, even then, I tried to subdue the amorous transports of the rival, and lo! my rash incontinent steps in to undeceive him! In vain I make you signs to show it is a ruse; you will not notice them; no, you pursue your point up to the very end, and are not satisfied till you have blurted all. Grand and sublime performance of an imagination that does not yield to any man alive! 'T is a rare treasure, worthy, i' faith, of the king's museum!

Lélie.

I 'm not surprised I spoil your plans. Unless you tell me of the things you do, I 'll spoil a hundred more of the same sort.

Mascarille.

So much the worse for you.

Lélie.

If you want to have some justice in your anger you ought at least to let me know your schemes. But if you always shut me out, I shall be always blundering in.

MASCARILLE.

Ah! there's the harm; 't is that that ruins us. I' faith, my master, — and I tell it you once more, — you will never be aught in this world but a blockhead.

LÉLIE.

Well, since the thing is done, there's no use thinking of it. My rival, anyhow, can't hurt me now; and, provided that your care, in which I trust —

MASCARILLE.

Come, say no more of this; we 'll talk of other things. I 'm not so easily appeased; no, no! I 'm much too angry. If I resume the guidance of your love-affairs you must do me, first, a certain service. That done, I 'll see about it.

LÉLIE.

If it depends on that, I will not thwart you. What is it you want? Tell me at once; my blood? my sword?

MASCARILLE.

What visions strike his brain! You are like the seconds in a duel, always more ready to draw your sword than pull your purse-strings.

Lélie.

Then say, what can I do for you?

Mascarille.

You absolutely must appease the anger of your father.

Lélie.

Oh! we 've made peace, my father and I.

Mascarille.

Yes, but not for me. I killed him this morning — out of love for you. The notion shocked him. To an old man like that the attack came hard; because it forces him to make, regretfully, some sad reflections on his age and weakness. The worthy man, old as he is, clings to his life, and does not like a joke upon it; he fears it may be a prognostic, and is so angry with me he has sent, I 'm told, an officer to find me. Now, I 'm afraid if the king's-house is once my dwelling I shall be rooted there and not get out again without much trouble. There are plenty of decrees already out against me; for virtue is always envied, and in this cursèd age 't is even persecuted. Come; go at once, and soothe him.

Lélie.

Yes, I can soothe him. But will you promise —

Mascarille.

Good heavens! wait and see. (*Lélie goes off.*) Let me take breath after so much fatigue! I 'll cease, for a time, the strain of all these schemes; why should I fret myself like any goblin? Léandre is shoved aside and cannot hurt us. Célie is held at present —

## SCENE SIXTH

Ergaste, Mascarille

Ergaste.

I have been hunting for you everywhere, to do you service, and warn you of a most important secret.

Mascarille.

What is it?

Ergaste.

Can no one overhear us?

Mascarille.

No one.

Ergaste.

You and I are friends as much as can be. I know your schemes, and the love your master bears you. Beware; for Léandre has a plan to carry off your Célie. I have been warned that it is all arranged; he enters, this very night, Trufaldin's house in masquerade, having heard that often, in the evening, the women of this quarter go there masked.

Mascarille.

Yes! That 's enough. He has n't reached the summit of his joy, for I can easily filch that prey from him. I know a secret thrust 'gainst *that* assault, by which I 'll make him wound himself. He does not know the gifts with which my soul 's provided. Adieu; we 'll drink a pint together at our next meeting.

## SCENE SEVENTH

Mascarille, *alone.*

We must, *must* gather to ourselves whatever luck there is in this new amorous project; and do it, too, by some adroit surprise that is not commonplace, without incurring danger, or

tempting fortune. If I forestall him and go masked with friends, Léandre will surely not confront us; yet, if before him we obtain the prize he will have all the credit of the seizure. For, as his scheme is known already, suspicion will fasten on him; while we, thus sheltered from pursuit by him, need fear no harm from this most perilous adventure. The one thing needful is to make no stir ourselves, and draw the chestnut softly with a cat's paw. Come, I 'll go mask myself and certain cronies; there is no time to lose in notifying all. I know where lies the hare, and I can furnish, in a moment, without much trouble, both men and masks. Yes, I 'll put all my powers to the task. Though I 've received of heaven the gifts of knavery, I am not in the ranks of those ill-nurtured fellows who hide the talents God has given them.

## SCENE EIGHTH

Lélie, Ergaste

Lélie.

You say he means to carry her off under a masquerade?

ERGASTE.

Nothing can be more certain. One of his party having told me this, I went at once to Mascarille and warned him of it. He said he would break the party up by some invention, made, I think, on the spur of the moment. Meeting you thus by chance, I thought I ought to let you know of this.

LÉLIE.

You have obliged me greatly by telling me this news, and I shall recognize your faithful service.

## SCENE NINTH

LÉLIE, *alone.*

My scamp will play them, doubtless, some fine trick, and I will second him with all my might. Never shall it be said that in a matter that concerns me closely I would not lift a finger for the work. This is about the hour. Ha! how surprised they 'll be to see me. The deuce! why have n't I my poniard with me? But come who will against my person, here are two good pistols, and my sword is good. (*Calls out before Trufaldin's house*) Holà! some one! a word with you!

SCENE TENTH

TRUFALDIN, *at his window*, LÉLIE

TRUFALDIN.

What is it? Who calls to me?

LÉLIE.

Keep your doors closed most carefully to-night.

TRUFALDIN.

Why so?

LÉLIE.

Because some persons have prepared a masquerade to come and give you trouble. They mean to abduct your Célie.

TRUFALDIN.

Ye gods!

LÉLIE.

They 'll soon be here. Stand where you are, and you will see them from your window — There! what did I tell you? Don't you see them coming? Hush! I will now, before your eyes, insult them. You 'll see a fine set-to, if I 'm not balked.

## SCENE ELEVENTH

Lélie, Trufaldin, Mascarille, *and his followers masked*

Trufaldin.

Ho! the silly fools, who think to surprise me!

Lélie.

Masks, whither bound? can I be told? Trufaldin, open your doors and let them play a mummery. (*To Mascarille, disguised as a woman*) Good powers! how pretty she is! and dainty, too! What! don't you like it? Can't I, without offence, lift up your veil and see your pretty face?

Trufaldin.

Be off, you knaves; retire at once. Signor, good-night to you, and many thanks.

## SCENE TWELFTH

Lélie, Mascarille

Lélie, *pulling off Mascarille's mask.*

What! Mascarille! was it you?

Mascarille.

No, some one else.

Lélie.

Alas! what a surprise! What cruel fate is ours! How could I have divined, not being warned, the secret reasons of this masquerade? Unlucky that I am! to play you such a prank without a thought! I 'd like, in my just wrath, to give myself a hundred lashes.

Mascarille.

Farewell, O glorious spirit! rare imagination!

Lélie.

Alas! if in your anger you deprive me of your help, to what saint can I pray?

Mascarille.

To the head-devil of hell.

Lélie.

Oh! if your heart is not of bronze or iron forgive, once more, my great imprudence. If I must ask your pardon on my knees, behold me —

Mascarille.

Ta-ra-ra! Come, comrades, let us go; I hear some people coming at our heels.

## SCENE THIRTEENTH

Léandre *and his followers masked,* Trufaldin *at his window*

Léandre.

Hush! no noise; let us do nothing that is not the proper thing.

Trufaldin.

What! masks all night besieging at my door! Messieurs, pray don't catch cold for nothing; the brains that do so must be empty. It is rather late to carry off your Célie. She begs you to excuse her; she is in her bed and cannot speak with you. I am sorry. But to reward the pains you take for her, she sends you a present of this smelling-bottle.

Léandre.

Fy! what a stench! my clothes are spoiled! We are discovered; come, let us go this way.

END OF THIRD ACT.

## Act Fourth

### SCENE FIRST

LÉLIE, *disguised as an Armenian,* MASCARILLE

MASCARILLE, *laughing.*

WELL, here you are! — rigged out in a funny fashion.

LÉLIE.

Ah! you revive my hopes by laughing.

MASCARILLE.

I am always getting over anger; in vain I curse and swear, I cannot keep it up.

LÉLIE.

Therefore believe that if I ever come to power you shall be content with the gratitude I'll show; and have I but a single crust —

MASCARILLE.

Enough. Think of yourself in this new scheme. If you commit a folly now you can't impute it to surprise; you ought to know your rôle by heart by this time.

Lélie.

But tell me, how did Trufaldin greet you?

Mascarille.

By simulated zeal I made a noodle of him, and told him I had hastened there to say if he did not take care he would be outwitted; that Célie was an object aimed at from more points than one, as he might see from that false letter; that I myself had been approached, though I had managed to avoid the snare, and, full of ardor for his interests, had come to warn him to be on his guard. From that I moralized and made a fine harangue about the scoundrels of the present day. I said that, for myself, weary of the world and all its infamies, I longed to labor for my soul's salvation, get far away from trouble, and in the service of some honest man live peaceably. In short, if he thought well of it, I had no greater hope than to pass the remainder of my days with him. Moreover, if he pleased, I should not ask for wages, but, on the contrary, would put into his hands my little patrimony and the product of my toil, to which, in case God took me from the world, I meant to make him heir. That was the way to win him. Now, in order that you may settle with your

mistress upon some plan by which your love shall triumph, I wish to bring you both together, and he himself has opened a way to lodge you in his house by telling me of a son, long-lost, whom he has lately, in a vision, seen returning. And I will now repeat the story that he told me, on which I instantly arranged our present scheme.

LÉLIE.

No, that 's enough; I know it; you have told me twice already.

MASCARILLE.

That may be; but after I 've gone over it three times, perhaps your mind, for all its self-sufficiency, may still forget some circumstance.

LÉLIE.

But this delay to me is such an effort.

MASCARILLE.

Ah! do not let us run too fast, for fear of tripping! Don't you see, your noddle is somewhat soft. You must strengthen it well for this adventure. Formerly Trufaldin came from Naples. His name was then Zanobio Ruberti. A plot which caused a civil riot, of which he was suspected by the town (in point of fact he is

not a man to trouble the State), obliged him to escape by dead of night. A wife and infant daughter, left behind him, died soon after, and in his great distress at this event, he wished to carry to some distant town, besides his property, his son, the last hope of his race, whom, for better teaching, he had placed with a certain Master Albert, at Bologna. But for two years, in spite of all his efforts, he could not hear of him. So, thinking he was dead, he came here to Messina, and took his present name, and for the last twelve years has found no trace of either Albert or his son, young Horace. Now there 's the history in the main, which I repeat to make a sure foundation in your mind. You are to be henceforth a merchant of Armenia, who has seen them safe and sound in Turkey. If I, on hearing of Trufaldin's dream, bethought me of resuscitating this lost pair, it is because I know, in matters of adventure, how common it is to see folks taken at sea by Turkish pirates, and then returning to their families after fifteen or twenty years, during which they were given up as dead. For my part, I 've seen hundreds of such cases. Well, not to puzzle our brains too much about it, let us use the fiction, no matter what 't is worth. You are to say that

they related their misfortunes in your hearing, and that you gave them means to buy their freedom; but since you were obliged to leave because of business, Horace desired you to seek his father, whose fate and residence he knew, and in whose house he wished you to remain until he followed you a few days later. Those are the lessons I have already taught you more at length.

LÉLIE.

These repetitions are superfluous. My mind has understood the matter from the first.

MASCARILLE.

Now I'm going in, to wing him our first shaft.

LÉLIE.

But listen, Mascarille; one thing troubles me. Suppose that he should ask how his son looks?

MASCARILLE.

Fine difficulty, that! You ought to know that the boy must have been quite small when his father saw him last; besides, slavery as well as time would have changed his face.

LÉLIE.

True. But tell me, if Trufaldin remembers that he has seen me, what shall I do?

Mascarille.

Have you no memory? Did we not agree just now that as he saw you for a moment only he would not recognize you thus disguised by clothes and that dyed skin?

Lélie.

Yes, so we did. But stop, that place in Turkey —

Mascarille.

'T is all the same, I tell you, — Turkey or Barbary.

Lélie.

But the name of the town where I am to say that I have seen them?

Mascarille.

Tunis. — He 'll keep me talking here all night! He calls my repetitions useless, and yet I 've told him that name a dozen times to-day.

Lélie.

Well, go in ; begin the play. I want no more of you.

Mascarille.

At least be prudent, act discreetly, and don't give way to rare imagination.

LÉLIE.

Leave me to manage all. How timid your spirit is.

MASCARILLE.

Remember: Horace, a scholar in Bologna; Trufaldin's name in Naples, Zanobio Ruberti; Albert, the tutor.

LÉLIE.

Ah! but you shame me by such preaching. Am I a fool in your opinion?

MASCARILLE.

No, not exactly; but something very like it.

SCENE SECOND

LÉLIE, *alone.*

When he is useless he plays the dog at heel; but when he feels the help he gives me, he sets no bounds to his free speech. Ah! soon those beauteous eyes will shine upon me, the power of which lays on my neck a yoke so precious. I go, without a hindrance and with words of flame, to lay before that beauty the torments of my heart and learn my fate! — But here they come.

## SCENE THIRD

Trufaldin, Lélie, Mascarille

Trufaldin.

Just Heaven, be thanked for this my softened lot!

Mascarille.

You are right to dream, since in your case 't is false that dreams are lies.

Trufaldin, *to Lélie.*

What thanks, what blessings can I give you, seigneur, — you whom I must call the angel of my joy?

Lélie.

Thanks are superfluous, and I release you from them.

Trufaldin, *to Mascarille.*

I have, but I know not where, seen some one who resembles this Armenian.

Mascarille.

That 's what I said; one sees such striking likenesses sometimes.

Trufaldin, *to Lélie.*

You have seen this son on whom my hopes depend?

LÉLIE.

Yes, Seigneur Trufaldin; the liveliest fellow on earth.

TRUFALDIN.

He told you of his life, and often spoke of me?

LÉLIE.

Ten thousand times.

MASCARILLE.

Well, rather less than that, I think.

LÉLIE.

He described you to me just as I see you now — face, figure, carriage.

TRUFALDIN.

Can that be so, since, when he saw me last he was but seven years old? I think his tutor even would have some trouble to know my face after this lapse of time.

MASCARILLE.

Yet blood-relations keep such memories. My father's features are so deeply graven on my —

TRUFALDIN.

Enough. Where did you leave him?

Lélie.

In Turkey, at Turin.

Trufaldin.

Turin? But that's a town, I think, in Piedmont.

Mascarille, *aside.*

O clumsy brain! (*To Trufaldin*) You did not hear him; he said Tunis; and that, I think, is where he left your son. But all Armenians have, by habit, a certain blemish of the tongue which seems to us quite harsh. For instance, all the words that end in *nis* they change to *rin* and when they mean to say Tunis, pronounce Turin.

Trufaldin.

I needed that light to understand him. (*To Lélie*) By what means did he tell you to discover me?

Mascarille, *aside.*

What will he answer? (*To Trufaldin, after making a few passes as if fencing*) Excuse me, I was practising my fencing-lesson; formerly no hand could equal mine. I've held the foils in many and many a hall.

Trufaldin, *to Mascarille.*

But that is not what I now want to know. (*To Lélie*) By what other name did my son call me?

Mascarille, *as Lélie hesitates to answer.*

Ah! Signor Zanobio Ruberti, what joys are these that heaven sends you!

Lélie.

Yes, that is your real name, the other is fictitious.

Trufaldin.

Where did he tell you he was born?

Mascarille.

Naples is certainly a most delightful place in which to stay; but to you it must be hateful.

Trufaldin.

Can not you be silent and allow us to converse?

Lélie.

In Naples his life began.

Trufaldin.

Where did I send him in his childhood; and in whose care?

Mascarille.

That poor Master Albert did wisely when he accompanied to Bologna the son you trusted to his discretion.

Trufaldin.

Ah!

Mascarille, *aside.*

We are lost if this goes on!

Trufaldin, *to Lélie.*

I should like to hear from you the story of their adventure. On what vessel did fate —

Mascarille (*as Lélie hesitates*).

Excuse me, I don't know why it is I can't help yawning. Seigneur Trufaldin, do you not think this stranger may need food? — and it is very late —

Lélie.

I? no, I am not hungry.

Mascarille.

Ah! but you may be hungrier than you think.

Trufaldin, *opening the door of his house.*

Come in.

Lélie.

After you.

MASCARILLE, *to Trufaldin.*

Monsieur, in Armenia the masters of houses show no ceremony. (*To Lélie, as Trufaldin enters first*) Oh, you poor fool! What! not two words to say?

LÉLIE.

He took me by surprise. But now, fear not; I have regained my wits and I shall boldly —

MASCARILLE.

Here comes our rival; he knows nothing of this. (*They enter Trufaldin's house.*)

## SCENE FOURTH

ANSELME, LÉANDRE

ANSELME.

Wait, Léandre; suffer a few brief words which seek the peace and honor of your days. I do not speak as father of my daughter, nor as a man concerned about his family, but as *your* father, anxious for your good; not wishing to either flatter you or hide the truth, — in short, as, with a frank, pure soul, I would that my own blood be treated in like circumstances.

Do you know how the eyes of others view this love of yours, which through the actions of one night is known to all? Have you thought to how much talk and ridicule your enterprise of yesterday exposed you? what judgments people make on this erratic choice of a woman who, they say, is but a gypsy waif, a vagrant girl, whose best employment is only that of beggar? I blush for you much more than for myself, though I 'm involved in the scandal that I hear; yes, I, whose daughter, promised to your suit, cannot, without affront, find herself thus despised. Ah! Léandre, wake from degradation! open your eyes and cast this blindness from you. Our minds are never wise at all times, but the briefest errors are certainly the best. If we take beauty as the only dower, regret follows close on marriage; the handsomest woman is but ill-protected then against the coldness that succeeds satiety. I tell you again that these impulsive actions, these ardors of youth and passion may give us certainly some charming nights, but such felicities are little durable; our passion, slackening its pursuit, after such nights gives dismal days; hence cares, anxieties, distress, and sons discarded by their father's wrath.

LÉANDRE.

In all you say there is nothing that my own mind has not already told me. I know how much I owe for that great honor you are willing still to grant me, and of which I am unworthy. I see, despite the struggle in my breast, the value of your daughter and her virtue; therefore I wish to try —

ANSELME.

Some one is at the door; let us withdraw a little, lest some secret poison issue and overcome you.

## SCENE FIFTH

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

MASCARILLE.

We shall see our plot in fragments if you continue such huge folly.

LÉLIE.

Must I forever listen to your reprimands? Of what are you complaining now? Did I not succeed in all I said — after the first?

MASCARILLE.

Hum! So, so; witness your saying Turks were heretics, and swearing they adored as gods

the sun and moon. But let that pass. What *did* vex me, beyond measure, was to see your love forget itself so strangely. Near Célie, it was just like soup over too hot a fire, that bubbles to the edges of the pot and then boils over?

Lélie.

How could I force myself to more restraint? You know I scarcely said a word to her.

Mascarille.

Yes, but not speaking to her was very far from all. Your gestures, your behavior, during that short repast gave ground for more suspicion than others would have given in a year.

Lélie.

How so?

Mascarille.

How so? Why, every one could see at table, where Trufaldin made her sit, that you had eyes for none but Célie. Scarlet and speechless, ogling her incessantly, paying no heed to what they served you, drinking no wine unless she drank; then, snatching from her hand the glass (not throwing out the dregs or rinsing it), you drank her leavings, putting your lips, most ostentatiously, to the side that hers had touched. Next, on the morsels fallen from her dainty

fingers, or bitten by her teeth, you pounced as nimbly as a cat upon a mouse, and swallowed them all as I green peas. Moreover, under the table you made a noise, shuffling your feet intolerably, so that Trufaldin, whom you hit by two most pressing knocks, punished with kicks that innocent pair of dogs, who would, if they had dared, have flown at you. After all that, to say that you behaved yourself! As for me, I suffered in every limb; in spite of the cold, I 'm sweating still with my exertions. Bound to your lot, as a player of bowls watches the rolling of his ball, I tried with various contortions of my body to stop your foolish actions.

LÉLIE.

Oh, heavens! how easy 't is to condemn the things of which we do not feel the pleasant causes. However, I am willing, just to please you, to put restraint upon my love. In future—

SCENE SIXTII

TRUFALDIN, LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

MASCARILLE.

We are talking of the fortunes of your son Horace.

TRUFALDIN.

That is well. (*To Lélie*) Will you permit me to speak in private with this person?

LÉLIE.

If not, I should be very indiscreet.

(*Goes away.*)

## SCENE SEVENTH

TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE

TRUFALDIN.

Listen to me. Do you know what I have come here to do?

MASCARILLE.

No; but if you choose I soon shall know.

TRUFALDIN.

From a tall, strong oak, two centuries old, I have cut an admirable branch, chosen expressly for its medium thickness; of which I have made, with satisfaction, a stick, about — yes, about as stout as that (*shows his arm*); less stout, however, at one end, well suited, as I think, to thrash a back, for it is knotty, green, easy to handle, massive —

MASCARILLE.

And for whom, if I may ask, is that prepared?

TRUFALDIN.

First, for you; then for that good apostle who tried to fool me on the one hand, and rob me on the other, — for that Armenian, that sham merchant, brought here to dazzle me with that false tale.

MASCARILLE.

What! you do not think —

TRUFALDIN.

Don't seek to make excuses. He himself betrayed, most luckily, his ruse, by telling Célie, as he pressed her hand, that it was all a mere pretence, to come and see her. He did not notice my young ward Jeanette, who heard him say this, word for word. And I 've no doubt, although he did not say so, that you are his accomplice.

MASCARILLE.

Oh! you do me wrong! If he has shown you this affront, at least believe that he deceived me first.

TRUFALDIN.

Do you wish to show me that you speak the truth? Will you assist my arm in driving him

away? If you will give that scoundrel a good drubbing with me I will acquit you of all other crime.

MASCARILLE.

Yes, hang it, yes. Most willingly; I'll dust his jacket well, and you shall see I'm not concerned with *him*. (*Aside*) Ha, ha! Mr. Armenian, you shall be finely trounced, you mar-all!

## SCENE EIGHTH

LÉLIE, TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE

TRUFALDIN, *to Lélie.*

Stop! a word with you. So, impostor! you dare to dupe an honest man and try to trick him?

MASCARILLE.

Pretend to have seen his son in foreign lands in order to get access to his house!

TRUFALDIN, *striking Lélie.*

I'll settle you at once!

LÉLIE, *to Mascarille, who also strikes him.*

Ha! you rascal!

MASCARILLE.

That 's how rogues —

LÉLIE.

You brute! —

MASCARILLE.

— are treated here. Take that, and that.

LÉLIE.

What! am I a man to —

MASCARILLE, *beating and chasing him.*

Be off! be off, I tell you, or I 'll knock you down!

TRUFALDIN.

That pleases me right well. Come back; I 'm satisfied.

*Mascarille follows Trufaldin into his house.*

LÉLIE, *returning.*

To me! this shameful insult! by a valet! How could I ever have foreseen the traitor's action? Assault his master, insolently!

MASCARILLE, *from a window.*

May one inquire how your back feels now?

LÉLIE.

Do you dare to speak to me in that way?

MASCARILLE.

That 's what it is to have no eyes and not see Jeanette, and to possess a tongue without discretion. But this time I am not angry; I cease to swear and rail against you. Though the imprudence of your action was immense, my hand upon your spine blots it all out.

LÉLIE.

Ha! I will be revenged for this disloyal conduct.

MASCARILLE.

You caused the harm yourself.

LÉLIE.

I?

MASCARILLE.

If you were not so harum-scarum you would have seen, when you were talking to your idol, that Jeanette was close by, whose subtle ears discovered all.

LÉLIE.

What! did she hear the little word I said to Célie?

MASCARILLE.

Why else this sudden expulsion? Yes, your gabble has turned you out. I don't know if you often play piquet, but certainly you 've learned to throw your cards away.

LÉLIE.

Oh me! most miserable of all unfortunates! But still, why was I beaten off by you?

MASCARILLE.

I never did a better thing than take that mission. So doing, I prevented all suspicion that I was author or accomplice of the plot.

LÉLIE.

You might have struck more gently.

MASCARILLE.

Not such a fool! Trufaldin watched me closely. Besides, I 'll tell you this; under that useful pretext I was not sorry to discharge my bile. However, the thing is done, and if I have your word that you will not avenge, either directly or in any other way, the blows I rained with joy upon your haunches, I 'll promise you, in virtue of the post I have within this house, to satisfy your hopes before to-morrow night.

LÉLIE.

Though your behavior has been much too rough, what is there that I would not promise to —

MASCARILLE.

Then you do promise it?

LÉLIE.

Yes, I promise it.

MASCARILLE.

But that's not all. You must make a vow that you will never meddle again in anything, no matter what, that I may undertake.

LÉLIE.

So be it.

MASCARILLE.

If you fail to keep your word, mind! a quartan ague.

LÉLIE.

But keep your word, think of my —

MASCARILLE, *leaving the window.*

Take off those Turkish clothes, and grease your back.

LÉLIE, *alone.*

Alas! is evil ever on my traces to make me bear disaster on disaster?

MASCARILLE, *coming out of Trufaldin's house.*

What! no farther off as yet? Do go away at once. But, above all, take nothing on yourself; do nothing; since I do all for you, let that suffice. Don't help my project by the smallest act. Keep quiet.

Lélie, *going away.*

Yes, yes, I'll hold to that.

Mascarille, *alone.*

Now let me see what measures I will take.

## SCENE NINTH

Ergaste, Mascarille

Ergaste.

Mascarille, I've come to bring you news which gives a cruel blow to your designs. A gypsy youth — who is not black, however, and seems to think himself of consequence — has just arrived, accompanied by an aged woman, very haggard, and he has gone to see Trufaldin and buy that slave you want. He seems most eager to obtain her.

Mascarille.

No doubt he is the lover Célie mentioned. Was ever fate more muddled than this of ours? Out of one scrape, we are in another! In vain we learn that Léandre is on the point of yielding, and will trouble us no longer, and that his father, arriving suddenly, turns the scales in

favor of Hippolyte, so that to-day their contract will be drawn. That lover departs, but now another comes, more fatal still, to snatch away our last remaining hope. However, by a stroke of marvellous art, I think I can at least retard this sale, and so gain necessary time to find a happy ending to this great affair. A robbery committed; by whom? who knows? gypsies are seldom men of means. Yes, I will cleverly, upon some slight pretence, imprison this new comer for a time. I know some officers, thirsting to make arrests, who are for just such strokes most resolute. Under the eager hope of being bribed there 's nothing that they will not blindly undertake; and innocence pays tribute to their profit.

END OF FOURTH ACT.

## Act Fifth

### SCENE FIRST

Mascarille, Ergaste

Mascarille.

Ah, dog! ah, cur! ah, caitiff of a brain! Is your persecution to be eternal?

Ergaste.

By the vigilant care of officer Balafré your affair was going well; the gypsy rascal would have been locked up if your master, at the very moment, had not come himself, and, like an idiot, spoilt your stratagem. "I will not allow," he said most haughtily, "that an honest man be dragged to prison in this shameful way; I will go bail and answer for him on his face." Then, as the officers objected to release their prisoner, he charged so violently on them that they, who are but ordinary men and timid for their bodies, have taken flight and still are running, thinking that Lélie follows at their heels.

Mascarille.

That traitor does not know the gypsy is in that house to snatch his beauty from him.

Ergaste.

Adieu; a certain business forces me to leave you.

## SCENE SECOND

Mascarille, *alone.*

Yes, I am stupefied by this last folly. One would think — in fact, I am persuaded — that the marplot demon by which he is possessed takes pleasure in opposing me, and leads him purposely where'er his presence can do my plots most harm. But, nevertheless, I will pursue my end, and, spite of all these blows, see which of us two, his devil or I, can carry the day. Célie perceives our purpose, and views her departure with this gypsy man repugnantly. I'll try to profit by that fact. But here they come; let me consider what to do at once. This furnished house is in my hands, I'll say; I can dispose of it with perfect freedom; no one lives in it, and I keep the key. Heavens! how many adventures in a few short hours! how many parts a rogue is forced to play!

### SCENE THIRD

Célie, Andrès

Andrès.

You know it, Célie; there is nothing that my heart has not attempted, to prove to you the ardor of my love. Among the Venetians in my early youth my courage gained great esteem in war; and I might then, without too much belief in self, have won, in serving them, some high employ. But, at that moment, I saw *you* and all else was forgotten. Then, by a rapid metamorphosis, my heart abandoned all to rank me among your lovers; whence no accident, nor your indifference, can ever turn my persevering love. Since then, being parted from you by a fatal chance far longer than at first I augured, I have lately spared nor time nor trouble to rejoin you. Having at last encountered an old gypsy, I learned, impatiently, from her that for a certain sum important to her people, you had been carried to this town as hostage. At once I hurried hither to break those selfish chains, and to receive from you the orders you think best. Yet, for all that, I find you mournfully distressed at seeing me, just at the time your eyes should shine with gladness.

If you would like to live retired, I have in Venice, from booty gained in war, enough for both; and if, as formerly, I may only be your suitor, I consent; my heart shall have ambition to be only that which pleases you.

CÉLIE.

Your zealous care for me is plainly visible. To seem distressed would be ungrateful; and my face, by the emotion that it shows, does not express my heart on this occasion. Pains in my head disturb me, and if, as you say, I have some power over you, pray let our journey be delayed a day or two, until this illness takes another course.

ANDRÈS.

It shall be delayed for as long as you can wish; all my desires tend only to content you. Let us find a house in which you can repose. Here 's one with a placard upon it which seems most apropos.

## SCENE FOURTH

CÉLIE, ANDRÈS, MASCARILLE, *disguised as a Switzer*

ANDRÈS.

Signor Switzer, are you the owner of this house?

Mascarille, *speaking in the Swiss manner.*

Me? — yes, to serf you.

Andrès.

Can we hire it?

Mascarille.

Yes, me for stranchers keep a furnished room; but not for folks that lead an evil life.

Andrès.

I do not doubt your house is free from blame.

Mascarille.

You new in this town; me see that in his face.

Andrès.

Yes.

Mascarille.

The madame, is she marriage with monsieur?

Andrès.

How?

Mascarille.

If she be wife or sister?

Andrès.

No.

Mascarille.

Then come for sale? or seeking joustice? No law, no law, it costs too much! the judges thiefs, the lawyers very wicked.

Andrès.

That is not my purpose.

Mascarille.

Come then to find this girl? and carry her away?

Andrès.

'T is no affair of yours. (*To Célie*) I will return to you in a moment; but I must fetch the old woman quickly, and countermand the carriage I had ordered.

Mascarille, *pointing to Célie.*

She not well?

Andrès.

She has a headache.

Mascarille.

Me haf goot wine, and cheese. Enter my leetle house.

(*They enter it.*)

SCENE FIFTH

Lélie, *alone.*

Whate'er the ardor of my impatient soul, my word is passed to wait and let another act, to see and yet dare nothing, while heaven ordains my fate.

SCENE SIXTH

ANDRÈS, LÉLIE

LÉLIE, *to Andrès, who leaves the house.*

Are you seeking some one in this dwelling?

ANDRÈS.

'T is a furnished lodging I have lately taken.

LÉLIE.

But the house is one belonging to my father; my valet sleeps here at night to guard it safely.

ANDRÈS.

I know nothing of that. The written sign shows that it was to let. Read that.

LÉLIE.

Well, this surprises me, I own. Who the devil could have put it there? and for what purpose? Ha! i'faith, I begin to guess what it all means. Yes! it can only be for that which I foresee.

ANDRÈS.

And may I ask what that may be?

LÉLIE.

To any one but you I 'd keep it secret; but you are concerned in this, and I know you will be discreet. That sign to let must be, at least

I so conjecture, a clever invention of that valet of mine; a subtle noose he dangles out to catch and put into my power a certain damsel for whom my soul is tortured until I make her mine. I've missed my chance too many times already.

Andrès.

Her name is — ?

Lélie.

Célie.

Andrès.

Ha! why not have said so sooner? You need only have spoken. I would have spared you all the pains this project costs you.

Lélie.

What! do you know her?

Andrès.

It is I who have just bought her.

Lélie.

Oh! wondrous tale!

Andrès.

Her health being such we cannot start at once, I have placed her in this lodging which I hired. I am delighted that you have told me your intention.

LÉLIE.

Ah! can it be from you that I obtain the happiness I desire? Will you —?

ANDRÈS, *rapping on the door.*

You shall be satisfied at once.

LÉLIE.

What can I say to you? what thanks —

ANDRÈS.

None; make me none; I will not have them.

—•—

SCENE SEVENTH

LÉLIE, ANDRÈS, MASCARILLE

MASCARILLE, *aside.*

Well, well! if here is not my idiot of a master. What new ill-luck will he bring down upon us?

LÉLIE.

In that grotesque costume who could have recognized him? Come forward, Mascarille; you 're welcome.

MASCARILLE.

Me am enchant of honor; but me not Maqueril. Me nefer sell a wife or daughter.

Lélie.

Oh! the droll humbug! he is good, i'faith!

Mascarille.

Go walk you; no laugh at me.

Lélie.

Come, come! take off that mask and know your master.

Mascarille.

Te tefil! me say me nefer know you.

Lélie.

All is arranged; you need not play a part.

Mascarille.

If you not go, me fetch you a good plo.

Lélie.

Your German accent is superfluous, I tell you. We are all agreed; his kindness serves my love. He gives me all my hopes could ask, and you have nothing more to fear.

Mascarille.

If by extreme good fortune you are thus agreed, I quit my part and am myself again.

Andrès.

Your valet serves you with much ardor! But I 'll return to you; stay here awhile.

### SCENE EIGHTH

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

LÉLIE.

Well, what say you now?

MASCARILLE.

That my very soul delights to see such bright success succeed our trouble.

LÉLIE.

And yet you would not drop the mask; you could not quite believe I brought this thing about.

MASCARILLE.

Knowing you well I was at first alarmed; and even now I think the event surprising.

LÉLIE.

But do confess that I have done great things. I have, at least, repaired my blunders and won the honor of finishing the work.

MASCARILLE.

So be it; and if it be so, you will have been — more lucky than wise.

### SCENE NINTH

Célie, Andrès, Lélie, Mascarille

Andrès.

Is this the object of your love, of whom you spoke to me?

Lélie.

Ah! what happiness can equal mine!

Andrès.

'T is true that for my rescue I am indebted to you; I should be most unworthy if I did not own it. But still, that benefit would be too bitter if at the cost of all my heart I had to pay it. Judge whether, since her beauty transports my soul with love, I must, at such a price, pay you my debt. You are too generous; you will not exact it. Farewell! For some days longer we must still stay here.

(*Retires with Célie.*)

### SCENE TENTH

Lélie, Mascarille

Mascarille, *laughing.*

I laugh! and yet I am sure I have no desire to. Ho! you are well agreed! He gives you Célie! Hey! don't you hear me?

LÉLIE.

It is too much. Never again will I beseech you for such wasted care. I am a dog, a traitor, an odious brute, unworthy of assistance, incapable of anything. Go, cease all efforts for a luckless fellow who will not let you make him happy. After such dire mishaps, after my great imprudence, Death alone can help me.

SCENE ELEVENTH

MASCARILLE, *alone.*

Yes, that 's the true method to fulfil his destiny. Nothing is wanting now to crown his folly but to give up and die. Still, 't is in vain his sore vexation makes him cast off my care and help. I *choose*, happen what may, spite of himself, to serve him. I 'll win the day against his blundering demon. The more an obstacle is mighty, the greater is the glory of success; the difficulties men surmount are maids of honor, who deck our fame.

## SCENE TWELFTH

Célie, Mascarille

Célie, *to Mascarille, who speaks low to her.*

No matter what you say nor what you seek to do, I see but little hope from this delay. Judging by our success so far, they are not likely to agree, and, as I have already told you, a heart like mine can never do injustice to the one nor to the other; I am most strongly, though by different ties, attached to both. While Lélie has my love and all its forces, Andrès, for his share, has my gratitude; and it will never suffer that my secret thoughts consent to anything against his interests. Yes, though within my soul he cannot have a place, though I can never give my heart to crown his love, at least I owe, for all he did for me, never to choose another to his injury, and to repress my own desires with the same harshness that I show to his. Under such difficulties, raised by duty, judge whether you can nourish any hope.

Mascarille.

Truly, those obstacles are most vexatious, and I don't know the art of doing miracles. But I shall use my strongest efforts, move heaven and

earth, and turn myself on every side to find some prudent way, and tell you soon what there may be to do.

## SCENE THIRTEENTH

HIPPOLYTE, CÉLIE

HIPPOLYTE.

Since your stay here, the ladies of these parts complain, most justly, of the thefts your eyes commit. If you still rob them of their finest conquests, and make their lovers faithless, no hearts can hope to evade the shafts with which you strike them; a thousand victories gathered in your chains enrich you daily to our detriment. But as for me, I would make no complaint of the absolute power of your rare charms if, when my lovers turn from me to you, a single one were left to soothe me for the loss of others. But, most inhumanly, you take them all; and 't is that harsh proceeding of which I now complain.

CÉLIE.

This is indeed a courteous way to make a jest; but spare me a little, I entreat you. Your eyes, yes, your own eyes, know their deserts too

well ever to fear from mine a danger. They are far too well assured of the resistless power of their charms to take alarm in that way.

Hippolyte.

And yet, I have said only that which every mind is thinking. Without referring to the rest, who does not know that Célie inspires hopes in Lélie and Léandre?

Célie.

I think, if they have shown themselves thus blind, that you will easily console your heart for such a loss. A lover who could make so poor a choice must seem to you but little to be desired.

Hippolyte.

No; on the contrary, I act from very different motives, and find so great a merit in your beauty, so many reasons fitted to excuse the inconstancy of those who let themselves be captured, that I can never blame the new devotion by which Léandre forswore his vows to me; and I shall see him soon, without either wrath or spite, returning, by his father's will, to my allegiance.

## SCENE FOURTEENTH

Célie, Hippolyte, Mascarille

Mascarille.

Great news! great news! Astounding triumph! which I have come to announce to you at once.

Célie.

What is it!

Mascarille.

Listen. Here, without humbug —

Célie.

How?

Mascarille.

— is the end of a true, pure comedy. That old, haggard gypsy-woman was just —

Célie.

Well, what?

Mascarille.

— just passing along the street, thinking of nothing, when another old woman, much deformed, after peering into the first one's face for quite a time, growled out insulting words, that gave the signal for a furious fight, which had for weapons, for muskets, arrows, daggers, only four withered claws, with which the combatants endeavored to tear the little flesh that

years had left upon their bones. Nothing was heard but words like "bitch," "drab," "slut." At once their coifs flew off along the street, leaving their hairless skulls to view, which made the combat laughably horrific. Andrès and Trufaldin, at the noise, as well as many others, rushed to the place, and had the greatest work to part them, such fury lashed them on. Still, when the tempest calmed, they each endeavored to hide the shame of their bald heads; and when the lookers-on wished to know what caused the trouble, she who had made the first attack, after gazing at Trufaldin for a good long time, spoke up and said: "'T is you, unless my eyes deceive me, you, whom they tell me lives unknown in these parts. O fortunate encounter! Yes, Signor Zanobio Ruberti, fortune it is that makes me find you just at the moment when, for your interests, I was most distressed. At the time when you left Naples and your family, I had, you know, your daughter in my care. I nurtured her from infancy, and by the time that she was four years old her grace and charms appeared. That was the time this infamous hag, whom you see here, making herself familiar in our house, robbed me of that sweet treasure. Alas! from this disaster your wife endured such

sorrow that her life was shortened, and, at her death, fearing that you would blame me for your daughter's loss, I sent you word that both were dead. But now that I have found that woman here, she must be made to say where your child is." As he heard the name Zanobio Ruberti, which the old woman uttered several times during her tale, Andrès changed color, and at last, turning to Trufaldin, who stood amazed, he said: "What! can it be? has heaven assisted me to find the father I have sought so long? How could I see and yet not recognize the fountain of my blood, the author of my being! Yes, father, I am Horace, your son. Albert, with whom you left me, having died, I felt new, restless longings waking in my breast. I left Bologna and my studies, and for six years I roamed in divers lands, wherever my inquisitive desires led me. At length an inward impulse urged me to seek my country and my people; but when I went to Naples, alas! I could not find you; nor could I learn your fate, except by conflicting rumor. So, having wasted time on barren search, I ceased my quest in Venice. There I have lived till now, gaining no further light about my family." I leave you to judge whether Trufaldin felt, as this went on, an or-

dinary transport. And now, to shorten what you can hear in detail at your leisure, Trufaldin, through the confession of the gypsy, receives you as his daughter. Andrès is your brother, and cannot be your husband. Therefore, to pay his obligation to my master, he obtains you from your father for Lélie's wife; and Lélie's father, witness of these events, gives to this marriage his approval.

Célie.

I am left speechless by this great surprise.

Mascarille.

They are coming at my heels — except the two old championesses, who are mending up their persons from the fight. Léandre is with them; and (*to Hippolyte*) your father too. Now I must go and tell my master, and, inasmuch as he has always been the marplot of his hopes, may heaven now perform some miracle within him!

(*Mascarille goes out.*)

Hippolyte.

Such a strange overturn bewilders me; and, for myself, I know not how to meet it. But here they come.

## SCENE FIFTEENTH

TRUFALDIN, ANSELME, PANDOLFE, CÉLIE, HIPPOLYTE, LÉANDRE, ANDRÈS

TRUFALDIN, *to Célie.*

Ah! my daughter!

CÉLIE.

Oh! my father!

TRUFALDIN.

Have you already heard how heaven has prospered us?

CÉLIE.

Yes, I have heard the wondrous news.

HIPPOLYTE, *to Léandre.*

To excuse your love you need say nothing, since here, before my eyes, is all that you could say.

LÉANDRE.

Your generous pardon is that which I desire; but I affirm to heaven that in this sudden return my father does far less than my own will.

ANDRÈS, *to Célie.*

Who could have thought a love so pure as mine would be condemned by Nature? Still, honor ruled it ever, and with a little change I can retain it.

Célie.

As for me, I blamed myself, and thought that I did wrong when I could only feel for you a high esteem. I did not know what powerful restraint withheld me on a brink so pleasant but so slippery, and checked my heart from yielding to a love my mind endeavored to implant there.

Trufaldin, *to Célie.*

What will you say to me, my daughter, if, in recovering you, I think at once of giving you away, and promise you to Lélie under the laws of wedlock?

Célie.

That on you my destiny depends.

## SCENE SIXTEENTH

Trufaldin, Anselme, Pandolfe, Célie, Hippolyte, Léandre, Andrès, Lélie, Mascarille

Mascarille, *to Lélie.*

Now let us see whether your demon has the power to destroy this solid hope, and whether against this triumph of good luck you will again be up in arms with your imagination. By what

an unforeseen good stroke of gentle destiny your hopes are crowned and Célie is your own!

LÉLIE.

Can I believe that heaven's all-potent power —

TRUFALDIN.

Yes, it is true.

PANDOLFE.

The matter is determined.

ANDRÈS.

And in this way do I discharge the debt I owe you.

LÉLIE, *to Mascarille.*

Then I'll embrace you tens of thousand times, and in this joy —

MASCARILLE.

Aië! aië! more gently, if you please. He nearly strangled me! I pity Célie if you kiss her thus with such effusion. I'll do without such hugs in future.

TRUFALDIN, *to Lélie.*

You see the happiness that heaven has sent me; and since in one day joy thus comes to all, let us not separate until the close of it.

MASCARILLE.

Here you are, all provided! Is there no girl to suit poor Mascarille? When I see each joining his other each, I 've longings, too, for marriage.

ANDRÈS.

Yes, I have your mate.

MASCARILLE.

Well then, come on! and may propitious heaven give us all sons of which we are the fathers.

END OF L'ÉTOURDI.

# LE MARIAGE FORCÉ

(The Forced Marriage)

Comedy

IN ONE ACT

# PERSONAGES

SGANARELLE.

GÉRONIMO.

DORIMÈNE . . . *young coquette, engaged to Sganarelle.*

ALCANTOR . . . *father of Dorimène.*

ALCIDAS . . . *brother of Dorimène.*

LYCASTE . . . *lover of Dorimène.*

PANCRACE . . . *Aristotelian philosopher.*

MARPHURIUS . . *Pyrrhonian philosopher.*

TWO GYPSIES.

The scene is on a public square.

# LE MARIAGE FORCÉ

## SCENE FIRST

SGANARELLE, *speaking to those within his house.*

I SHALL return in a moment. Take good care of the house, and see that all goes on just as it should. If any one brings money, send for me quickly at Seigneur Géronimo's; but if anybody says he wants me, tell him I am out and shall not be back all day.

## SCENE SECOND

SGANARELLE, GÉRONIMO

GÉRONIMO, *having overheard Sganarelle's last words.*

That is a prudent order.

SGANARELLE.

Ah! Seigneur Géronimo, I meet you just in time. I was going to your house in search of you.

GÉRONIMO.

And for what purpose, if you please?

SGANARELLE.

To communicate a matter that I have in mind, and beg you to give me your advice.

GÉRONIMO.

Most willingly. I am very glad to meet you, for here we can speak quite freely.

SGANARELLE.

Put on your hat, I beg of you. The matter relates to something of consequence that has been proposed to me, and it is well to take no steps without the advice of friends.

GÉRONIMO.

I am obliged to you for making choice of me. You have only to tell me what the matter is.

SGANARELLE.

But, first of all, I must conjure you not to try to please me, but to tell me plainly your own thought.

Géronimo.

Yes, I will do so, if you wish it.

Sganarelle.

I know nothing more to be condemned than a friend who does not speak out frankly.

Géronimo.

You are right.

Sganarelle.

And in this age how few sincere and loyal friends we find.

Géronimo.

Too true.

Sganarelle.

Promise me therefore, Seigneur Géronimo, to speak to me with every sort of frankness.

Géronimo.

I promise you that.

Sganarelle

But swear it, on your honor.

Géronimo.

Yes, on the honor of a friend. Tell me this matter.

Sganarelle.

I wish to know, from you, whether I should do well to marry.

GÉRONIMO.

What, you?

SGANARELLE.

Yes, myself, in my own person. Now what is your opinion as to that?

GÉRONIMO.

I will ask you first to answer me a question.

SGANARELLE.

What is it?

GÉRONIMO.

How old may you be at this time?

SGANARELLE.

I?

GÉRONIMO.

Yes.

SGANARELLE.

Faith, I don't know; but I am strong and well.

GÉRONIMO.

What! don't you know about how old you are?

SGANARELLE.

No; who cares for that?

GÉRONIMO.

Answer me this: how old were you when we first knew each other?

Sganarelle.

Faith, I was only twenty then.

Géronimo.

How many years were we together in Rome?

Sganarelle.

Eight years.

Géronimo.

How long did you live in England?

Sganarelle.

Seven years.

Géronimo.

And in Holland, where you went next?

Sganarelle.

Five years and a half.

Géronimo.

Yes; and how long is it since you came back here?

Sganarelle.

I returned in fifty-two.

Géronimo.

From fifty-two to sixty-four, twelve years, it seems to me. Five in Holland are seventeen; seven in England make twenty-four; eight for our stay in Rome make thirty-two; and you

were twenty when we met; that makes precisely fifty-two. So, Seigneur Sganarelle, upon your own confession you are at this time between fifty-two and fifty-three years old.

SGANARELLE.

Who, I? Oh, that can't be.

GÉRONIMO.

Bless you! the calculation 's right; and thereupon, I 'll tell you frankly, like the friend you made me promise to be, — marriage is not for you. That is a step on which young men should think maturely before they venture it; but men of your age ought not to think of it at all. If 't is true, as people say, that the greatest of all follies is to marry, I know nothing more ill-advised than to commit that folly at an age when we should both know better. Now I have told you plainly what I think: I advise you not to marry. I shall consider you the most ridiculous of men if, being free until this hour, you should now go and take upon yourself the heaviest of chains.

SGANARELLE.

And I, I tell you I 'm resolved to marry; and I shall not be thought ridiculous by others in wedding the woman I have chosen.

Géronimo.

Oh! that's another thing! You did not tell me that.

Sganarelle.

'T is a girl who pleases me, and whom I love with all my heart.

Géronimo.

You love her with all your heart?

Sganarelle.

Yes; and the marriage will take place to-night; I have passed my word.

Géronimo.

Marry by all means! I shall say no more.

Sganarelle.

How could I change a plan already made? But, Seigneur Géronimo, does it seem to you that I am no longer fit to take a wife? Let us say no more about my age, but consider other things. Is there a man of thirty who looks more fresh and vigorous than I? Have I not all the motions of my body as good as ever? Am I ever seen to need a carriage or a chair to get about? Have n't I all my teeth as sound as

any in the world? (*Shows his teeth.*) Don't I eat vigorously my four good meals a day, and was there ever seen a stomach of greater strength than mine? (*Coughs.*) Hem! hem! hem! Well, what say you?

Géronimo.

That you are right; I was mistaken. You will do well to marry.

Sganarelle.

I was averse to marriage formerly, but now I have some potent reasons to desire it. Besides the joys that I shall have in possessing a fine young woman, who will caress and cosset me, and rub me when I 'm tired — besides that joy, I say, I have considered that in staying as I am the race of Sganarelles will perish from the world; but by marrying I shall live, and live again in other myselves; also that I shall have the pleasure of seeing creatures that have issued from me, little beings as like to me as drops of water, who 'll play continually round the house, call me "papa," and tell me all their little nonsense when I come home at night. There now! it seems as if I really had them. I can see half a dozen about me now!

GÉRONIMO.

There 's nothing more agreeable, certainly, than that. Yes, I advise you to be married, and as soon as possible.

SGANARELLE.

What, really? You really do advise it?

GÉRONIMO.

Assuredly. You could not do a better thing.

SGANARELLE.

I am much delighted that, as an honest friend, you give me that advice.

GÉRONIMO.

Ha! ha! Who is the lady, if you please, with whom you mean to marry?

SGANARELLE.

'T is Dorimène.

GÉRONIMO.

That young Dorimène, who dresses smartly and is so coquettish?

SGANARELLE.

Yes.

GÉRONIMO.

Daughter of Seigneur Alcantor?

Sganarelle.

Precisely.

Géronimo.

Sister of a certain Alcidas, who flourishes a sword?

Sganarelle.

The same.

Géronimo.

Virtue of my life!

Sganarelle,

What 's that you say?

Géronimo.

I said good wife. You had better marry quickly.

Sganarelle.

Do you not think me right to make that choice?

Géronimo.

Undoubtedly. Ha! you 'll be finely married! Make haste about it.

Sganarelle.

You fill my heart with joy by saying that. I thank you for this advice, and I invite you to my wedding this very night.

GÉRONIMO.

I shall not fail; and I'll come masked, to do the ceremony greater honor.

SGANARELLE.

I shall be much obliged. Adieu.

GÉRONIMO, *as he goes away.*

That young Dorimène! daughter of Alcantor! married to Sganarelle, who is only fifty-three! Oh, what a marriage! what a marriage! what a marriage!

## SCENE THIRD

SGANARELLE, *alone.*

My marriage must be happy, for it pleases all; every one laughs and smiles when I tell them of it. I am indeed the happiest of men!

## SCENE FOURTH

DORIMÈNE, SGANARELLE

DORIMÈNE, *to a little lacquey who follows her.*

Come, come, hold my train properly; you must not amuse yourself by playing tricks.

Sganarelle, *aside, perceiving Dorimène.*

Here comes my mistress. Ah! is she not charming? What style, and what a figure! Is there a man who would not long for marriage at the sight of her? *(To Dorimène)* Where are you going, fair darling, dear future wife of me, your future husband?

Dorimène.

To do some shopping.

Sganarelle.

Well, my beauty, we may now expect to be most happy together. You will no longer have the right to refuse me anything. I can do all I like with you, and no one can find fault. You will be mine from head to foot, and I shall be the master of all,— of those two bright little eyes, of your saucy little nose, your tempting lips, your dainty ears, your pretty little chin, your — in short, all your whole person is mine, and I 've the right to kiss you and caress you as I choose. Are you not glad of such a marriage, my little poppet?

Dorimène.

Oh, very glad, I swear; for really, my father's sternness keeps me, even now, in the most exas-

perating slavery. I rage about the little liberty he gives me; and I have wished a hundred times to marry in order to get free of all restraint and have the chance to do just what I like. Thank God, you have come in time for that; and I expect in future to enjoy myself, and to make up, as people should, for the time that I have lost. You are, I am told, a very gallant man, who knows the world and how to live in it; therefore, I think, we shall make the best of households; for you, of course, will not be one of those unpleasant husbands who want their wives to live as owls. I must confess that I would not put up with *that*, and solitude is odious to me. I like cards and visits, assemblies, presents, promenades, — in short, all pleasures, of every kind. You ought to feel delighted to get a wife of such a lively nature. We shall never quarrel, of course, for I shall not oppose your actions, as you, I hope, will never hinder mine. Mutual compliance is what I think is right; people should never marry to make each other furious. In short, we 'll live, being married, as those who know the world. No jealous fancies will disturb our brains; it is enough that you are sure of my fidelity, as I 'm convinced of yours. But what 's the matter? What makes you look like that?

Sganarelle.

Only a nervous feeling in my head.

Dorimène.

Nervous? Ah! that 's a trouble people have in these days; but marriage will disperse it. Adieu: I really must get decent clothes and quit these rags. I am going now to buy the last few things I want; the tradesmen I 'll send to you.

## SCENE FIFTH

Géronimo, Sganarelle

Géronimo.

Ah! Seigneur Sganarelle, delighted to find you here! I have just met a jeweller, who, on the rumor that you were searching for a handsome diamond ring to offer to your bride, has begged me earnestly to speak to you and say that he has one for sale, a perfect jewel.

Sganarelle.

Oh, heavens! No haste for that.

Géronimo.

How? What does this mean? Where is the ardor you expressed just now?

Sganarelle.

Since then some little scruples about marriage have occurred to me. Before going farther, I desire to discuss the matter fully, and have a dream explained I dreamt last night, and which has only just come back to me. You know that dreams are much like mirrors, in which we sometimes see that which is going to happen. I dreamed I was in a ship; the waves were high, and —

Géronimo.

Seigneur Sganarelle, a little matter of business prevents me from listening longer. I don't know anything at all of dreams; and as to arguments on marriage, you have two very learned men for neighbors, two philosophers, who are just the ones to tell you all that can be said upon the subject. As for me, I am content with what I have already said to you, and I bid you now adieu.

Sganarelle, *alone.*

Yes, he is right. I must consult those learned men on the perplexity in which I find myself.

## SCENE SIXTH

PANCRACE, SGANARELLE

PANCRACE, *speaking to the side whence he came, and not seeing Sganarelle.*

I say you are an impertinent fool, my friend; a man devoid of all instruction, fit only to be banished from the world of letters.

SGANARELLE, *aside.*

Good! here comes one of the two, just in the nick of time.

PANCRACE, *speaking as before.*

I maintain to you, by the clearest reasoning, I will prove to you by Aristotle, that you are an ignorant fellow, an ignoramus, an ignorantissimus, in all conceivable moods and cases.

SGANARELLE, *aside.*

He 's quarrelling with some one.

PANCRACE, *speaking as before.*

You take upon yourself to argue, and you don't know as much as the first principles of reasoning.

SGANARELLE, *aside.*

Anger prevents his seeing me. (*Aloud*) Seigneur —

PANCRACE, *speaking as before.*

Your proposition is condemned in every land by true philosophy.

SGANARELLE, *aside.*

He must be greatly irritated. (*Aloud*) I—

PANCRACE, *as before.*

*Toto cœlo, tota via aberras.*

SGANARELLE.

I kiss the hands of Monsieur the philosopher.

PANCRACE.

Your servant.

SGANARELLE.

May I—

PANCRACE, *speaking again to the side by which he entered.*

Are you aware of what you have made? A syllogism *in Balordo!*

SGANARELLE.

I—

PANCRACE, *speaking as before.*

First premiss foolish, second premiss irrelevant, conclusion ridiculous.

SGANARELLE.

I—

Pancrace, *as before.*

Yes, I 'll deny that proposition *pugnis et calcibus, unguibus et rostro.*

Sganarelle.

Seigneur Aristotle, may I know why you are so angry?

Pancrace.

On a subject deserving my just wrath.

Sganarelle.

But *what*, if you please?

Pancrace.

An ignoramus, who maintains a most erroneous proposition, a fearful, frightful, execrable proposition.

Sganarelle.

May I ask you what it is?

Pancrace.

Seigneur Sganarelle, all things are overturned in these days; the world has fallen into great corruption. Horrific license reigns on every side; magistrates, appointed to maintain the law and order of the State, should die of shame for suffering a scandal so intolerable as that I mention.

Sganarelle.

What scandal?

Pancrace.

Is it not an awful thing, a thing that cries to heaven for vengeance, that we be forced to hear men say the form of a hat?

Sganarelle.

How?

Pancrace.

I maintain that we should say the *shape*, not the *form* of a hat. The difference betwixt form and shape is this: that, whereas form is the external configuration of all animate bodies, shape is the external configuration of all inanimate bodies; and, inasmuch as a hat is an inanimate body, we must say the shape of a hat and not the form. (*Turns again to the side whence he came.*) Yes, ignoramus that you are, this is how you ought to speak, and those are the express terms of Aristotle in the chapter on qualifications.

Sganarelle, *aside.*

I certainly thought the world was lost! (*Aloud*) Seigneur philosopher, don't worry about it any more; I —

PANCRACE.

I am so heated with anger I don't know where I am.

SGANARELLE.

Leave form and hat in peace. I have something that I wish to say to you. I —

PANCRACE.

Consummate fool!

SGANARELLE.

For pity's sake, compose yourself. I —

PANCRACE.

Ignorant booby!

SGANARELLE.

Goodness! I —

PANCRACE.

To dare maintain to *me* a proposition such as that!

SGANARELLE.

Yes, he was wrong. I —

PANCRACE.

A proposition condemned by Aristotle!

SGANARELLE.

True. I —

PANCRACE.

In positive terms.

SGANARELLE.

You are right. (*Speaking to the same side as Pancrace.*) Yes, you are a fool and an impudent fellow to presume to argue with a learned man who can read and write. Now that 's settled; and I beg you to listen to me. I have come here to consult you on a matter that puzzles me. I wish to take a wife to keep me company at home. This person is handsome and well-made; she pleases me much, and is delighted to marry me. Her father bestows her upon me. But I 'm a little afraid of — you know what, the disgrace that no man ever complains of. Now, I want you, as a philosopher, to tell me your opinion. What is your advice upon all this?

PANCRACE.

Rather than admit that we should say *form* of a hat I would agree that *datur vacuum in rerum natura*, and that I 'm a fool.

SGANARELLE, *aside.*

Plague take the man! (*To Pancrace*) Hey, philosopher! listen to me. I have been talking

to you for an hour or more, and you do not answer a word I say.

PANCRACE.

I beg your pardon. A just displeasure occupies my mind.

SGANARELLE.

Well, drop it now, and take the trouble to listen.

PANCRACE.

So be it. What do you want to tell me?

SGANARELLE.

About a certain matter which —

PANCRACE.

Pray, what tongue do you intend to use?

SGANARELLE.

What tongue?

PANCRACE.

Yes.

SGANARELLE.

*Parbleu!* the tongue that is in my mouth; you don't suppose that I would borrow that of my neighbor?

PANCRACE.

I said, what idiom, what language shall you use?

Sganarelle.

Ah! that's another thing.

Pancrace.

Do you intend to speak Italian?

Sganarelle.

No.

Pancrace.

Spanish?

Sganarelle.

No.

Pancrace.

German?

Sganarelle.

No.

Pancrace.

English?

Sganarelle.

No.

Pancrace.

Latin?

Sganarelle.

No.

Pancrace.

Greek?

Sganarelle.

No.

PANCRACE.

Hebrew?

SGANARELLE.

No.

PANCRACE.

Syriac?

SGANARELLE.

No.

PANCRACE.

Turkish?

SGANARELLE.

No.

PANCRACE.

Arabic?

SGANARELLE.

No, no, — French! French!! French!!!

PANCRACE.

Ah! French?

SGANARELLE.

Of course.

PANCRACE.

Then come to the other side of me; this ear is consecrated to foreign and scientific tongues; the other is for the common mother-tongue.

SGANARELLE, *aside*.

Philosophers of this kind seem to require ceremony.

Pancrace.

What is it you want?

Sganarelle.

To consult you on a matter of some difficulty.

Pancrace.

Ah! ah! a philosophical difficulty, no doubt.

Sganarelle.

Excuse me, I —

Pancrace.

Perhaps you wish to know whether the terms *substance* and *accident*, applied to being, are of the same import and interchangeable.

Sganarelle.

Nothing of the kind. I —

Pancrace.

Whether logic is an art or a science?

Sganarelle.

No. I —

Pancrace.

Whether it treats of the three activities of the mind, or of the third only.

Sganarelle.

No. I —

Pancrace.

If there be ten categories, or only one?

Sganarelle.

Not at all. I —

Pancrace.

Whether the conclusion is the essence of the syllogism?

Sganarelle.

No, no! I —

Pancrace.

Whether the principle of Good is in appetibility, or in conformity?

Sganarelle.

No, no, no! I —

Pancrace.

Whether Good is reciprocal with intention?

Sganarelle.

Eugh! no! I —

Pancrace.

Whether the end proposed moves us by its real existence or by its intended existence?

Sganarelle.

No, no, no, no, no! by all the devils, no!

Pancrace.

Then explain your thought, for I cannot divine it.

Sganarelle.

That is just what I want to explain; but you must listen. (*While Sganarelle says as follows:*) The affair I have to tell you is that I desire to marry a lady who is young and beautiful. I love her much, and I have asked her of her father, but as I am apprehensive —

Pancrace *is saying at the same time, not heeding Sganarelle:* —

Speech was given to man to explain his thoughts; thus thoughts are the portraits of things, and words are the portraits of thoughts. (*Sganarelle, exasperated, covers the philosopher's mouth several times with his hand, but the philosopher continues to speak each time the hand is removed.*) But these portraits differ from other portraits — inasmuch as other portraits are distinguishable from their originals — whereas speech includes its original within itself — because it is nothing else than thought explained — by external signs; hence — those who think well are also those who speak best. Explain to me therefore your thought by speech, which is the most intelligible of all signs.

SGANARELLE, *pushing the philosopher into his own house and holding the door to prevent him from coming out.*

Plague take the man!

PANCRACE, *within the house.*

Yes, speech is *animi index et speculum.* It is the interpreter of the heart, the image of the soul. (*Goes to the window and continues:*) It is a mirror which candidly presents to us the most mysterious secrets of our individual selves; and, since you have the faculty of ratiocination and of speech, how is it that you do not make use of words to let me understand your thought?

SGANARELLE.

That 's what I 'm trying to do, but you won't listen.

PANCRACE.

I am listening; speak.

SGANARELLE.

I said, philosopher, that —

PANCRACE.

Above all, be brief.

SGANARELLE.

I will.

PANCRACE.

Avoid prolixity.

SGANARELLE.

Hey! monsieur —

PANCRACE.

Cut down your speech to a Laconian apophthegm.

SGANARELLE.

If you —

PANCRACE.

No ambages, nor circumlocution.

(*Sganarelle, furious at not being able to get in a word, picks up stones to break the philosopher's skull.*)

PANCRACE.

Hey, what! Why do you get angry, instead of explaining to me your thought? Go to! You are more impudent than he who would maintain we should say *form* of a hat. I will prove to you, every time we meet, by convincing and demonstrative reasons, and by arguments *in Barbara*, that you never were and never will be anything but a blockhead, and that I am and shall be always, *in utroque jure*, the philosopher Pancrace —

Sganarelle.

Garrulous old devil!

Pancrace, *coming out of the house.*

Man of letters, man of erudition —

Sganarelle.

What! back again!

Pancrace.

Man of ability, man of capacity; (*going in*) man consummate in all natural sciences, morals, and policies; (*coming out*) philosopher *per omnes modus et casus;* (*going in*) man learned, superlatively, in fables, mythologies, and histories, (*coming out*) grammar, poesy, rhetoric, dialectics, sophistics, (*going in*) mathematics, optics, arithmetic, (*coming out*) cosmogony, geometry, specular and speculatory, (*going in*) medicine, astronomy, astrology, physiognomy, metoposcopy, geomancy, chiromancy, et cetera.

## SCENE SEVENTH

Sganarelle, *alone.*

The devil take philosophers who won't listen to a soul! I've always heard his master Aris-

totle was a loquacious prater. I must go and find the other; perhaps he 'll be more composed, more reasonable. (*Raps on a door.*) Holà!

## SCENE EIGHTH

MARPHURIUS, SGANARELLE

MARPHURIUS.

What do you want with me, Seigneur Sganarelle?

SGANARELLE.

Seigneur philosopher, I need your advice on a matter which disturbs me, and I have come to tell you about it. (*Aside*) Ha! this is good; he listens to folks, I see.

MARPHURIUS.

Seigneur Sganarelle, change, if you please, your mode of speech. Philosophy ordains that we shall never enunciate propositions that are positive; but, on the contrary, that we shall speak of all things with uncertainty, and suspend our judgment. For this reason, you must not say, "I have come," but "It seems to me that I have come."

SGANARELLE.

Seems to me?

MARPHURIUS.

Yes.

SGANARELLE.

*Parbleu!* of course it seems to me, because it is so.

MARPHURIUS.

That is not a necessary consequence; a thing might seem to you without its being truly so.

SGANARELLE.

What! Is n't it true that I have come?

MARPHURIUS.

That is uncertain; and we are bound to doubt of all things.

SGANARELLE.

Do you mean to say that I am not here, and that you are not talking to me?

MARPHURIUS.

It *appears* to me that you are here and *seems* to me that I am talking to you; but it is not positively certain that it is so.

SGANARELLE.

The devil! you 're joking. Here I am, and there you are, as plain as day; there is no *seems to me* about it. Let us be done with all these

subtleties, I beg of you, and talk of my affair. I have come to tell you that I wish to marry.

Marphurius.

I know nothing of that.

Sganarelle.

But I tell you it is so.

Marphurius.

It may be so.

Sganarelle.

The girl I want to marry is very young and very beautiful.

Marphurius.

That is not impossible.

Sganarelle.

Shall I do well or ill to marry her?

Marphurius.

Either the one or the other.

Sganarelle, *aside.*

Eugh! here 's another kind of music! (*Aloud*) I ask you, should I do well to marry the girl I mention.

Marphurius.

According as it may happen.

SGANARELLE.

Should I do ill?

MARPHURIUS.

Perchance.

SGANARELLE.

For heaven's sake, answer me properly.

MARPHUBIUS.

That is my intention.

SGANARELLE.

I have taken a great fancy to the girl.

MARPHURIUS.

That may be.

SGANARELLE.

Her father gives her to me.

MARPHURIUS.

That is possible.

SGANARELLE.

But, in marrying her, I fear to be made a cuckold.

MARPHURIUS.

It is feasible.

SGANARELLE.

Now, what do you think of it

Marphurius.

There is no impossibility.

Sganarelle.

But if you were in my place, what would you do?

Marphurius.

I don't know.

Sganarelle.

What do you advise that I should do?

Marphurius.

What you please.

Sganarelle.

I am getting furious!

Marphurius.

I wash my hands of it.

Sganarelle.

The devil take the dreaming fool!

Marphurius.

That will be as it may be.

Sganarelle, *aside.*

A plague upon him! Dog of a philosopher! I'll make him change his tune!

(*Attacks Marphurius with his stick.*)

MARPHURIUS.

Ahi! ahi! ahi!

SGANARELLE.

I've paid you off for all your nonsense now, and I'm glad of it.

MARPHURIUS.

What insolence! To outrage me in this way! The audacity of striking a philosopher like Me!

SGANARELLE.

Correct, if you please, that method of speech. We should doubt all things. You must not say I struck you, but that it seems to you I struck you.

MARPHURIUS.

I'll complain to the policeman of the quarter; I'll tell him about the blows I have received.

SGANARELLE.

I wash my hands of it.

MARPHURIUS.

I have the marks upon my person.

SGANARELLE.

That may be.

MARPHURIUS.

It was you who treated me in this way.

SGANARELLE.

That is not impossible.

MARPHURIUS.

I 'll get a warrant out against you.

SGANARELLE.

I know nothing of that.

MARPHURIUS.

You shall be condemned to prison.

SGANARELLE.

That will be as it may be.

MARPHURIUS.

Ha! I 'll see about it.

## SCENE NINTH

SGANARELLE, *alone*.

Heavens! I can't get a single positive word from that dog of a man; I am just as wise now as I was before. What ought I to do in this uncertainty as to the results of my marriage? Never man was more puzzled than I am now. Bless me! here come some gypsies. I 'll get them to tell my fortune.

## SCENE TENTH

Two Gypsy-women, Sganarelle

*The gypsies, with their tambourines, come in dancing and singing.*

Sganarelle.

Hey! how lively they are! Listen, you two; is there any way to make you tell me a good fortune?

First Gypsy.

Yes, my handsome gentleman, we 'll both tell your fortune.

Second Gypsy.

You need only give us your hand, and cross our palms, and we 'll tell you something to your good profit.

Sganarelle, *giving money.*

Here 's what you want, for both of you.

First Gypsy.

You have a lucky countenance, my good gentleman, a lucky countenance.

Second Gypsy.

Yes, a lucky countenance; the countenance of a man who 'll be great things some day.

First Gypsy.

You 'll be married before long, my good gentleman; you 'll be married before long.

Second Gypsy.

Yes, you 'll be married to a pretty woman, a pretty woman.

First Gypsy.

To a wife who 'll be loved and cherished by all the world.

Second Gypsy.

A wife who 'll make you many friends, my good gentleman, many friends.

First Gypsy.

A wife who 'll bring abundance to your home.

Second Gypsy.

A wife who 'll give you a great reputation, yes, a great reputation.

First Gypsy.

You 'll be esteemed for her sake, my good gentleman, yes, esteemed for her sake.

Sganarelle.

This is all very well; but tell me more. Am I fated to be deceived?

FIRST GYPSY.

Deceived?

SGANARELLE.

Yes.

SECOND GYPSY.

Deceived?

SGANARELLE.

Yes; am I fated to be a cuckold.

(*The two gypsies dance about, singing.*)

SGANARELLE.

The devil! that's not answering me! Come here, I say; I ask you both: Will my wife deceive me?

SECOND GYPSY.

Deceive you?

SGANARELLE.

Yes; shall I be deceived?

FIRST GYPSY.

You?

SGANARELLE.

Yes; shall I, or shall I not?

(*The two gypsies depart, singing and dancing.*)

## SCENE ELEVENTH

SGANARELLE, *alone.*

Plague take the saucy jades who leave me in this perplexity. I must, I absolutely *must* know the future of this marriage. I 'll go and find that great magician every one is talking of, whose marvellous art can make you see whatever you want to see — But, bless me! I don't believe I need to go to any great magician. Here 's something that shows me now all that I had to ask.

## SCENE TWELFTH

DORIMÈNE, LYCASTE, SGANARELLE, *retired to a corner of the stage, where he is not seen*

LYCASTE.

What! my beautiful Dorimène, are you not jesting?

DORIMÈNE.

No jest at all.

LYCASTE.

You are really going to marry?

DORIMÈNE.

Yes, really.

LYCASTE.

And the wedding takes place to-night?

DORIMÈNE.

To-night.

LYCASTE.

Can you, cruel that you are, forget the sort of love I have for you, and the sweet consent that you have given me?

DORIMÈNE.

I? Not at all. I regard you as before; this marriage need not make you so uneasy. This is a man I do not marry out of love; his wealth alone makes me accept him. I have no property, and you have none; now you know very well how dull life passes in the world when there 's no money, and how necessary it is, at any cost, to try to get some. Therefore I have seized this chance to put myself at ease; and I have done so in the hope of being soon delivered from the dotard whom I take. He is a man who certainly will die before long; I doubt if he has six months in his stomach. In fact, I warrant him dead within that time; I shall not have long to ask of heaven the happy state of widowhood. (*To Sganarelle, whom she sees.*) Ah!

we were speaking of you this very moment, and saying all the good that any one could wish.

Lycaste.

Is this the gentleman who —

Dorimène.

Yes, the gentleman who takes me for his wife.

Lycaste.

Permit me, monsieur, to congratulate you on your marriage, and to present you, at the same time, my very humble services. I assure you that you marry here a very virtuous person; and you, madame, I must rejoice with you over the happy choice that you have made. You could not have done better; monsieur has all the appearance of being the best of husbands. Yes, monsieur, I desire to be your friend, and to begin at once a little intimacy of visits and diversions.

Dorimène.

You do us too much honor. But I must go; time presses; we shall have all the leisure that we want to entertain each other.

### SCENE THIRTEENTH

SGANARELLE, *alone.*

Well, here I am, disgusted with my marriage, and I believe I shall not do badly to take my promise back. It may cost money to do so; but I had better lose whatever it may cost me than expose myself to something worse. Still, let me endeavor to get out of it adroitly. (*Raps on Alcantor's door.*) Holà!

### SCENE FOURTEENTH

ALCANTOR, SGANARELLE

ALCANTOR.

Ha! son-in-law, you are very welcome!

SGANARELLE.

Monsieur, your most obedient.

ALCANTOR.

You have come, of course, to hurry on the marriage.

SGANARELLE.

Excuse me.

ALCANTOR.

I assure you that I am in haste as well as you.

Sganarelle.

I have come for another purpose.

Alcantor.

I have given orders for all that is needed for these festivities.

Sganarelle.

That is not the question.

Alcantor.

The violins are engaged, the supper ordered, and my daughter is dressing to receive you.

Sganarelle.

But that is not what brings me here.

Alcantor.

You will, at last, be satisfied; nothing can hinder your contentment now.

Sganarelle.

Oh, heavens! 't is something else I —

Alcantor.

Come in, my son-in-law, come in.

Sganarelle.

I have only a word to say.

ALCANTOR.

Pray do not stand on so much ceremony; come in at once, I beg of you.

SGANARELLE.

No, no, I say; I want to speak to you out here.

ALCANTOR.

You want to tell me something?

SGANARELLE.

Yes.

ALCANTOR.

What is it?

SGANARELLE.

Seigneur Alcantor, I have asked your daughter in marriage, it is true; and you have given her to me; but I feel I am too far advanced in years to suit her; and I consider now I am not at all the husband that she ought to have.

ALCANTOR.

Pardon me, my daughter finds you excellent as you are; and I am sure that she will live most happily as your wife.

SGANARELLE.

Not so; for I am sometimes frightfully eccentric; she would suffer too much from my bad temper.

Alcantor.

My daughter's temper is complying; you will find that she adapts herself most readily to yours.

Sganarelle.

I have certain infirmities of body which may disgust her.

Alcantor.

That is nothing. A virtuous woman is never disgusted with her husband.

Sganarelle.

In short — since you insist upon my saying it — I advise you not to give her to me.

Alcantor.

Are you joking? I would rather die than break my word.

Sganarelle.

Oh! as for that, I give it back to you, and I —

Alcantor.

Not so; I promised her to you, and you shall have her, despite all others who are suitors for her hand.

Sganarelle, *aside.*

The devil!

ALCANTOR.

I have, you see, a most especial friendship and esteem for you; I would refuse my daughter to a prince in order to bestow her upon you.

SGANARELLE.

Seigneur Alcantor, I am much obliged for the honor that you show me; but I must now declare that I do not choose to marry.

ALCANTOR.

You?

SGANARELLE.

Yes, I.

ALCANTOR.

Your reasons, pray?

SGANARELLE.

Reasons? Well, my unfitness for the married state; I wish to imitate my father, and others of my race, who never married.

ALCANTOR.

Listen to me. Man's will is free; and I am not the one to endeavor to constrain it. You pledged yourself with me to marry my daughter, and all is now in readiness for the wedding. But since you intend to withdraw your word, I must consult and see what should be done about it. You will hear from me soon.

### SCENE FIFTEENTH

SGANARELLE, *alone.*

He proves more reasonable than I expected; I thought to have some trouble in getting free. Faith! when I think of it, I feel I've acted very wisely in getting out of this affair. I was about to take a step of which I might, perhaps, have long repented. Here comes the son, bearing, no doubt, the father's answer.

### SCENE SIXTEENTH

ALCIDAS, SGANARELLE

ALCIDAS, *in a soft tone of voice.*

Monsieur, I am your very humble servant.

SGANARELLE.

Monsieur, I am yours, with all my heart.

ALCIDAS, *in the same tone.*

My father tells me, monsieur, that you have come to withdraw the promise that you made to marry my sister.

SGANARELLE.

Yes, monsieur, and with great regret; but —

ALCIDAS.

Oh! monsieur, there 's no harm in that.

SGANARELLE.

I am truly sorry, I assure you, and I wish —

ALCIDAS.

No matter, I say. (*Offering Sganarelle two swords.*) Monsieur, be good enough to choose which one of these two swords you would prefer.

SGANARELLE.

Those two swords?

ALCIDAS.

Yes, if you please.

SGANARELLE.

What for?

ALCIDAS.

Monsieur, as you refuse to marry my sister after giving your word to do so, I think you cannot find the little compliment which I have come to make to you, out of place.

SGANARELLE.

How?

ALCIDAS.

Some families might make a scandal and denounce you, but we are persons to treat the thing

with suavity; and I have come to tell you civilly that, if you please, we will cut each other's throats.

Sganarelle.

Your compliment is horribly ill-turned.

Alcidas.

Come, monsieur, choose, I beg of you.

Sganarelle.

Your servant, monsieur, but I have no throat for you to cut. (*Aside*) What an outrageous style of talk is this!

Alcidas.

Monsieur, it must be, if you please.

Sganarelle.

Hey! monsieur, sheathe your compliment, I beg of you.

Alcidas.

Monsieur, let us make haste. I have some other business that awaits me.

Sganarelle.

But I won't have it, I tell you.

Alcidas.

You will not fight?

Sganarelle.

Not I.

Alcidas.

You really mean it?

Sganarelle.

I really mean it.

Alcidas, *after striking him several times with a stick.*

You shall have, at least, no reason to complain; you see that I do all in order. You break your word; I wish to fight you; you refuse to fight; and then I beat you. That is according to the rules of honor; and you are far too honorable a man not to approve my action.

Sganarelle, *aside.*

What devil of a fellow is this?

Alcidas, *offering the swords again.*

Now, monsieur, do the thing gallantly, without obliging me to pull your ears.

Sganarelle.

Again?

Alcidas.

I put constraint on no man, but you must either fight or marry my sister.

Sganarelle.

Monsieur, I will do neither; of that I do assure you.

ALCIDAS.

Positively?

SGANARELLE.

Positively.

ALCIDAS.

With your permission then —

(*Gives several blows to Sganarelle.*)

SGANARELLE.

Ahi! ahi! ahi! —

ALCIDAS.

I have all possible regret in being obliged to treat you thus; but I shall not cease to do so, if you please, until you have promised either to fight or to marry my sister.

SGANARELLE.

There, there! I'll marry her! I'll marry her!

ALCIDAS.

Ah! monsieur, I am delighted that you yield to reason, and that these little matters have passed so pleasantly. For really you are the man in all the world whom I esteem the most; and I should be completely in despair if you compelled me to maltreat you. I will call my father, and let him know that all is settled.

(*He knocks at Alcantor's door.*)

## SCENE SEVENTEENTH

ALCANTOR, DORIMÈNE, ALCIDAS, SGANARELLE

ALCIDAS.

Father, monsieur is now most reasonable; he wishes to do this thing with the best of grace. All is arranged, and you can proceed at once to marry him to my sister.

ALCANTOR, *to Sganarelle.*

Monsieur, here is her hand; give her your own. Now, heaven be praised! I am released; it is for you, in future, to control her conduct. Let us rejoice, and celebrate this happy marriage!

END OF LE MARIAGE FORCÉ.

# LE MÉDECIN MALGRÉ LUI

(The Doctor in Spite of Himself)

Comedy

IN THREE ACTS

## PERSONAGES

| | |
|---|---|
| GÉRONTE | *father of Lucinde.* |
| LUCINDE | *daughter of Géronte.* |
| LÉANDRE | *lover of Lucinde.* |
| SGANARELLE | *husband of Martine.* |
| MARTINE | *wife of Sganarelle.* |
| M. ROBERT | *neighbor of Sganarelle.* |
| VALÈRE | *servant to Géronte.* |
| LUCAS | *husband of Jacqueline.* |
| JACQUELINE | *nurse in Géronte's family.* |
| THIBAUD | *father of Perrin* } *peasants.* |
| PERRIN | *son of Thibaud* } |

# LE MÉDECIN MALGRÉ LUI

## Act First

The stage represents a forest

### SCENE FIRST

SGANARELLE AND MARTINE, *quarrelling*

SGANARELLE.

NO, I tell you no, I will not do it; it is for me to give the law and be the master here.

MARTINE.

And I tell *you*, I choose that you shall live in my way; I did not marry you to put up with all your pranks.

SGANARELLE.

Oh! the vexation of having a wife! How right old Aristotle was when he said that a woman was worse than a demon.

MARTINE.

Ho! the learned fellow, with his booby of an Aristotle!

SGANARELLE.

Yes, learned indeed. Find me another chopper of wood who can argue things as I do, and who served a famous doctor for six years, and knew his rudiments by heart when a baby.

MARTINE.

Plague take the arrant fool!

SGANARELLE.

Plague take the saucy slut!

MARTINE.

Curst be the day and hour when it came into my head to say yes.

SGANARELLE.

Cursèd be that old ram of a notary who made me sign my ruin.

MARTINE.

A pretty thing for you, indeed, to complain of that! You ought to render thanks to heaven at every minute for having me to wife. Did you deserve to marry a woman like me?

SGANARELLE.

True, true, you did me too much honor! I found that out as soon as we were married! Hey, *morbleu!* don't make me talk of that; I might say certain things —

MARTINE.

Hey, what *could* you say?

SGANARELLE.

Enough; we 'll let that chapter be. Suffice that we know what we know, and that you were mighty lucky to get a husband in me.

MARTINE.

What do you call lucky? A man who brings me to the hospital, a rake, a traitor, a spendthrift, who eats up all I have! —

SGANARELLE.

That 's false; I drink a part.

MARTINE.

Who sells, bit by bit, all there is in the house! —

SGANARELLE.

That 's living on the home.

MARTINE.

Even the very bed I lie on! —

SGANARELLE.

That's to make you get up early.

MARTINE.

You have n't left me one stick of furniture in the house!

SGANARELLE.

All the easier to move.

MARTINE.

And from morning till night you do nothing but gamble and drink!

SGANARELLE.

So that I may n't be bored.

MARTINE.

How do you expect me to keep my family meantime?

SGANARELLE.

Anyhow you like.

MARTINE.

I 've four little children on my shoulders —

SGANARELLE.

Set 'em on the ground.

MARTINE.

Who are crying for bread all the time.

SGANARELLE.

Give 'em the whip. When I 've eaten and drunk my fill, I want everybody else to get a surfeit.

MARTINE.

And do you expect, you drunkard, that things are to go on this way forever?

SGANARELLE.

Gently, gently, wife, if you please.

MARTINE.

Do you suppose that I shall put up eternally with your debauches and your insolence?

SGANARELLE.

Don't get angry, wife; don't get angry.

MARTINE.

And that I don't know a way to hold you to your duty?

SGANARELLE.

Wife, you know very well that my soul is not long-suffering, and my arm is strong.

MARTINE.

I scorn your threats.

SGANARELLE.

My little wife, my poppet, your skin is itching, as usual.

MARTINE.

I'll let you see I'm not afraid of you.

SGANARELLE.

My beloved better-half, you are trying to rob me of a blow.

MARTINE.

Do you suppose such talk can frighten me?

SGANARELLE.

Sweet object of my love, I'll warm your ears for you.

MARTINE.

Drunkard that you are!

SGANARELLE.

I'll thrash you.

MARTINE.

Sot!

SGANARELLE.

I'll skin you.

MARTINE.

Wretch!

SGANARELLE.

I'll flay you!

MARTINE.

Traitor! coward! villain! beggar! rascal! ragamuffin! rogue! liar! scoundrel! thief!—

Sganarelle.

Ah! you will have it, will you?

(*Takes a stick and beats her.*)

Martine, *screaming.*

Ah! ah! ah! ah!

Sganarelle.

That 's the only way to pacify you.

## SCENE SECOND

Monsieur Robert, Sganarelle, Martine

Monsieur Robert.

Holà! holà! Fy! fy! What is all this? 'T is an infamy! Plague take the villain who beats his wife!

Martine, *her arms akimbo, faces M. Robert and makes him step back as she talks, pushing him at last.*

And suppose I choose that he should beat me?

Monsieur Robert.

Ah! I consent, with all my heart.

Martine.

Why do you come meddling here?

MONSIEUR ROBERT.

I did wrong.

MARTINE.

Is it any of your business?

MONSIEUR ROBERT.

No. You are right.

MARTINE.

Just see his impudence! — to try to keep a husband from beating his own wife!

MONSIEUR ROBERT.

I retract it.

MARTINE.

What did you come to spy upon?

MONSIEUR ROBERT.

Nothing.

MARTINE.

Was it for you to stick your nose into our affairs?

MONSIEUR ROBERT.

No.

MARTINE.

Mind your own business.

MONSIEUR ROBERT.

I 'll not say another word.

Martine.

I like to be beaten.

Monsieur Robert.

So be it.

Martine.

It was n't at your expense.

Monsieur Robert.

True.

Martine.

Then I say you were a fool to come and poke yourself where you had no concern.

(*Monsieur Robert turns towards Sganarelle, who also talks and pushes him, and at last drives him off with a stick.*)

Monsieur Robert.

Comrade, I beg your pardon with all my heart. Go on, beat your wife, thrash her; I 'll help you if you like.

Sganarelle.

But I don't like!

Monsieur Robert.

Ah! that 's another thing.

Sganarelle.

I mean to beat her if I choose; and if I don't choose to beat her, I sha'n't beat her.

Monsieur Robert.

That 's all right.

Sganarelle.

She 's my wife, and not yours.

Monsieur Robert.

That 's very true.

Sganarelle.

You have no right to order me.

Monsieur Robert.

I agree to that.

Sganarelle.

And I don't need your help.

Monsieur Robert.

Glad of it.

Sganarelle.

And you are an impertinent fellow to come and thrust yourself into other people's affairs. Don't you know that Cicero says that between the tree and the finger you must never put the bark? (*Drives him out; then returns to his wife and tries to take her hand.*)

## SCENE THIRD

Sganarelle, Martine

Sganarelle.

Come now, let us make peace, we two. Shake hands.

Martine.

Yes! — after beating me in that way!

Sganarelle.

Oh! that 's nothing. Shake hands.

Martine.

No, I won't.

Sganarelle.

Hey!

Martine.

No.

Sganarelle.

My little wife!

Martine.

Don't!

Sganarelle.

Shake hands, I tell you.

Martine.

I will not do it.

SGANARELLE.

Come, come, come!

MARTINE.

No, I choose to be angry.

SGANARELLE.

Fie! 't was only a trifle. Come now!

MARTINE.

Let me alone.

SGANARELLE.

Make up, I say.

MARTINE.

No, you have treated me too ill.

SGANARELLE.

Well! well! I beg your pardon; put your hand there.

MARTINE, *giving him her hand.*

I forgive you. (*Aside, in a low voice*) But I 'll make him pay for this.

SGANARELLE.

You are a silly thing to mind it; such little squabbles are useful from time to time in friendship; half a dozen cuts with a stick between folks who love each other only warm up affec-

tion. Now I 'm going to the wood, and I promise you to-day more than a hundred fagots.

## SCENE FOURTH

MARTINE, *alone.*

No matter the sort of face that I put on to him, I shall not forget my resentment. I burn within me to find some means of punishing those blows. I know very well a woman always has in her hands a way to avenge herself on a husband; but that 's too delicate a punishment for that rascal of mine; I want a vengeance that he shall feel; that 's the only satisfaction I can have for the insults I 've received.

## SCENE FIFTH

VALÈRE, LUCAS, MARTINE

LUCAS, *to Valère, not seeing Martine.*

Ye fates! if we have n't taken upon us, you and I, a devil of a commission! I 'm sure I don't know, that I don't, what we expect to do about it.

Valère, *to Lucas, not seeing Martine.*

How could we help it, my poor fellow? Must obey the master, you know; besides, we have both of us an interest in the health of his daughter, our young mistress. No doubt her marriage, postponed by this illness of hers, is worth some money to us. Horace, who is liberal, has the best chance of all who aspire to her person; for though she does show some fancy for a certain Léandre, you know very well her father won't consent to receive him as a son-in-law.

Martine, *reflecting and supposing herself alone.*

Can't I think of some invention by which to avenge myself?

Lucas, *to Valère.*

But what a queer fancy her father has taken into his head, just because the doctors have wasted their Latin.

Valère, *to Lucas.*

Sometimes one finds, all of a sudden and in the simplest place, a thing one has searched for everywhere.

Martine, *still thinking herself alone.*

Yes, I must be revenged, no matter what it costs. Those blows have turned my stomach; I can't digest them, and — (*She says this absorbed in thought, so that not seeing the two men she jostles against them as she turns.*) Ah! messieurs, I beg your pardon; I did not see you. I was searching in my head for something that troubles me.

Valère.

Everybody has troubles in this world; we too are searching for something we want to find.

Martine.

Is it anything in which I can help you?

Valère.

Possibly. This is it. We want to find some clever man, some private doctor, able to give relief to the daughter of our master, who is attacked by a disease which has taken from her, all of a sudden, the use of her tongue. Many physicians have exhausted their science upon her; but sometimes one finds in country places men who have admirable secrets, certain particular remedies, who often do what other

doctors can't succeed in doing. We are searching for such a person now.

MARTINE, *aside in a low voice.*

Ah! does heaven inspire a scheme to avenge me on my rascal? (*Aloud*) You could not come to a better place to find the thing you want. We have a man, the most marvellous man in all the world for desperate maladies.

VALÈRE.

Hey! for mercy's sake, please tell us where to seek him.

MARTINE.

You 'll find him in that small grove you see up there. He 's amusing himself just now by chopping wood.

LUCAS.

A doctor who chops wood!

VALÈRE.

Amusing himself, you mean, by gathering herbs.

MARTINE.

No; he 's a curious man, who chooses to chop wood. He is queer, fantastic, whimsical, and you would never take him for what he really is. He clothes himself in such outlandish

ways, pretends, at times, to be quite ignorant, keeps all his knowledge to himself, and hates to use the marvellous talents that heaven has given him for doctoring.

Valère.

It is observable that all great men have whimseys, — some little grain of madness mingling with their knowledge.

Martine.

This one's madness is greater than you'd believe. Sometimes it goes so far that he would rather take a beating than exercise his skill. I warn you that you can't succeed in getting him — for he will not own he is a doctor — unless you take a stick, and compel him, by dint of blows, to admit he *is* what at first he will deny. That's how we all do here when we have need of him.

Valère.

What a strange form of madness!

Martine.

True; but after that you'll see that he does marvels.

Valère.

What is his name?

MARTINE.

Sganarelle. But you 'll know him easily. He 's a man who wears a big, black beard, and a ruff, with a green and yellow coat.

LUCAS.

A green and yellow coat! Is he a doctor of poll-parrots?

VALÈRE.

But is it true that he is really as skilful as you say?

MARTINE.

Why! he is a man who can do miracles. Six months ago a woman, who was given up by all the doctors, lay dead for hours, and they were just about to bury her; when some one brought, by force, the man I speak of. He put, having looked at her, a little drop of something, I don't know what, between her teeth, and, all of a moment, up she got, out of her bed, and began to walk about the room as if nothing had ever happened.

LUCAS.

Ah!

VALÈRE.

It must have been a drop of liquid gold.

MARTINE.

Perhaps it was. It is not three weeks since

a young lad just twelve years old fell from the steeple of the church, and broke his head and arms and legs upon the pavement. No sooner had they dragged our man to see him than he rubbed the body with a certain ointment he knows how to make, and the boy jumped up directly and ran to play as usual in the gutter.

LUCAS.

Ah!

VALÈRE.

He must be a man of universal knowledge.

MARTINE.

No one doubts that.

LUCAS.

Thank goodness! He 's just the man we want. Let us go quick and find him.

MARTINE.

But remember well the advice that I have given you.

LUCAS.

Hey, *morbleu!* let us alone for that. If a beating is all that 's needed to make him mind, the cow is ours.

VALÈRE, *to Lucas.*

We were mighty lucky to meet this woman; for my part, I indulge the greatest hope of what may come of it.

## SCENE SIXTH

SGANARELLE, VALÈRE, LUCAS

SGANARELLE, *singing behind the stage.*

La, la, la —

VALÈRE.

I hear some one who is singing and chopping wood.

SGANARELLE, *appearing with a bottle in his hand and not seeing Lucas and Valère.*

La, la, la. Faith, I 've worked enough to have earned a drop. (*After drinking.*) Chopping wood makes one as thirsty as all the devils. (*Sings.*)

How sweet, how sweet,
My lovely bottle!
How sweet they are,
Thy little gurgles!
How blest my fate
If thou wert always full!
Ah! bottle darling,
Why art thou ever empty?

Come, come, must n't beget melancholy.

VALÈRE, *in a low voice to Lucas.*

Here he is himself.

LUCAS, *low to Valère*

I think 'tis true — we 've run our noses on him.

VALÈRE.

Let us examine him a little nearer.

SGANARELLE, *hugging his bottle.*

Ah! you little vixen! how I love you, pretty pet! (*Sings. Perceives Valère and Lucas watching him, and lowers his voice.*) How blest my fate if — (*Seeing that they examine him closely.*) What the devil do those fellows want with me?

VALÈRE, *to Lucas.*

It is certainly he.

LUCAS, *to Valère.*

Yes, rigged up as she described him.

SGANARELLE, *aside.*

(*He puts his bottle on the ground and as Valère stoops to bow, thinking he means to steal it, he puts it on the other side of him; then when Lucas does the same thing he picks up the bottle and holds it pressed against his stomach with various comic gestures.*)

They are consulting together, and staring at me! What does all this mean?

VALÈRE.

Monsieur, it is you, I think, who are named Sganarelle.

SGANARELLE.

Hey, what!

VALÈRE.

I asked you if your name is Sganarelle.

SGANARELLE.

Yes and no, according to what you want.

VALÈRE.

We wish to show you all the civilities in our power.

SGANARELLE.

In that case, I am Sganarelle.

VALÈRE.

Monsieur, we are most delighted to meet you. We have been directed to you here as a person of whom we are in search; and we now implore your aid, of which I do assure you we stand much in need.

SGANARELLE.

If it is anything that depends upon my little business, messieurs, I shall be ready to do you service.

Valère.

Monsieur, you are most obliging. But pray put on your hat; the sun may discommode you.

Lucas.

Yes, monsieur, pop it on.

Sganarelle, *aside*.

These folks seem mighty ceremonious! (*Puts on his hat.*)

Valère.

You must not think it strange that we have come to see you; skilful practitioners are always in demand, and we are well-informed of your capacity.

Sganarelle.

Yes, 't is true that I 'm the first man in the world at making fagots.

Valère.

Ah! monsieur —

Sganarelle.

I don't spare trouble. I make them in such a manner that no one can find fault with them —

Valère.

But, monsieur, that is not the question.

SGANARELLE.

And I sell them at one hundred and ten sous the hundred —

VALÈRE.

Don't let us talk about them, if you please.

SGANARELLE.

And I will not sell them for less than that, I promise you.

VALÈRE.

Monsieur, we know exactly how things are.

SGANARELLE.

Well, if you know exactly how things are, you know that that is how I sell them.

VALÈRE.

Monsieur, all this is merely joking.

SGANARELLE.

Joking! I can't take less.

VALÈRE.

Let us talk of other things, I beg of you.

SGANARELLE.

You may get them cheaper somewhere else; there are fagots and fagots; but for those I make —

VALÈRE.

Hey! monsieur, let us be done with all this talk.

SGANARELLE.

I swear you could n't get the like if you paid double for them.

VALÈRE.

Hey! fie!

SGANARELLE.

No, on my conscience; and I speak sincerely; I 'm not a man to overcharge.

VALÈRE.

Why should a person like *you*, monsieur, amuse himself with vulgar shams and lower himself to talk in this way? How is it that a man so learned, a famous doctor such as you, should wish to disguise himself from all the world, and bury the noble talents that God has given him?

SGANARELLE, *aside*.

He 's mad!

VALÈRE.

For pity 's sake, monsieur, cease to prevaricate in this way.

SGANARELLE.

How?

LUCAS.

This gammon ain't a mite o' use. We know, I tell you, what we do know.

SGANARELLE.

What do you know? What do you mean? Whom do you take me for?

VALÈRE.

For what you are — a celebrated doctor.

SGANARELLE.

Doctor yourself; but I am none, and never was one.

VALÈRE, *low to Lucas.*

His mania is getting hold of him. (*Aloud*) Monsieur, I beg you not to deny this thing again, and do not force us, if you please, to sad extremities.

SGANARELLE.

To what?

VALÈRE.

To certain things we should be grieved to do.

SGANARELLE.

*Parbleu!* I say, you can do what you like. I 'm not a doctor; and I don't know what you are saying.

Valère, *aside.*

I see that we must use that remedy. (*Aloud*) Monsieur, once more, I beg you to own up to what you are.

Lucas.

For gracious sake! don't plague us with that stuff no more. Confess at once you are a doctor.

Sganarelle, *aside.*

I'm getting frantic.

Valère.

Pray why deny what everybody knows?

Lucas.

Why all these fibs? What good are they to you?

Sganarelle.

Messieurs, I tell you in one word as well as in ten thousand — I am not a doctor.

Valère.

You are not a doctor?

Sganarelle.

No.

Lucas.

What! not a doctor?

SGANARELLE.

No, I tell you, no.

VALÈRE.

Since you *will* have it, we can't help ourselves. (*Each takes a stick and thrashes him.*)

SGANARELLE.

Ahi! ahi! ahi! Oh, messieurs, I 'll be anything you please.

VALÈRE.

Then why compel us to such violence?

LUCAS.

And put us to the fuss of beating you?

VALÈRE.

I do assure you, I had great regret.

LUCAS.

I 'm sorry, too; upon my soul, I am.

SGANARELLE.

What the devil is all this, messieurs? For pity 's sake, inform me. Is it for fun, or are you crazy, both of you, that you will have it I 'm a doctor?

VALÈRE.

What! you won't give up? Do you still deny that you are a doctor?

SGANARELLE.

The devil take me if I am!

LUCAS.

Is n't it true that you 're a doctor?

SGANARELLE.

No! may the plague choke me! (*They beat him again.*) Ahi! ahi! Yes yes! oh, yes! I 'm a doctor, messieurs, I 'm a doctor,— apothecary, if you like. I 'll consent to anything rather than be beaten to a jelly.

VALÈRE.

Come, that is right. I am glad to see you reasonable at last.

LUCAS.

You ram the joy into my heart when I see you talk like that.

VALÈRE.

I beg your pardon with all my soul.

LUCAS.

And please excuse the liberty I took.

VALÈRE.

I can assure you, you will not repent for owning what you are. You will, undoubtedly, be well repaid.

SGANARELLE.

But, messieurs, tell me: are you not yourselves mistaken? Is it so very certain that I 'm a doctor?

LUCAS.

Yes, on my oath, it is.

SGANARELLE.

What, really?

VALÈRE.

Undoubtedly.

SGANARELLE.

The devil take me if I knew it.

VALÈRE.

Why! you are the cleverest doctor in the world.

SGANARELLE.

Ha! ha!

LUCAS.

A doctor who has cured I don't know how many diseases.

SGANARELLE.

*Tudieu!*

Valère.

That woman, who was held for dead six hours and was all prepared for burial, when, with a single drop of something, you brought her back to life and she walked about her room — have you forgotten her?

Sganarelle.

The deuce!

Lucas.

And that small boy that tumbled from the steeple and broke his head and arms and legs, whom you, with an ointment of I don't know what, set on his pins at once, and off he went to playing in the gutter.

Sganarelle.

The devil!

Valère.

And I assure you, you cannot fail to be contented. You will earn anything you please simply by letting us conduct you where we wish.

Sganarelle.

I shall earn anything I please?

Valère.

Yes.

SGANARELLE.

Ha! I 'm a doctor, there 's no denying that. I did forget it; but now I recollect. What is the case in question? Where must I go?

VALÈRE.

Where we shall take you. The matter is to see a girl who has lost her speech.

SGANARELLE.

Faith, I 've not found it.

VALÈRE, *to Lucas.*

He likes to joke. (*To Sganarelle*) Come on, then, monsieur.

SGANARELLE.

What! without a doctor's robe?

VALÈRE.

We 'll get one as we go along.

SGANARELLE, *handing his bottle to Valère.*

Here, hold that, you; that 's where I keep my jalap. (*Spits on the ground and turns to Lucas.*) You tread on that, by the doctor's order.

LUCAS.

My gracious! here 's a doctor that I like; I think he must succeed, he 's such a big buffoon!

END OF FIRST ACT.

## Act Second

The stage represents a room in Géronte's house

### SCENE FIRST

Géronte, Valère, Lucas, Jacqueline

Valère.

YES, monsieur, I believe you will be satisfied. We have brought you the greatest doctor in the world.

Lucas.

Yes, I say, pull up the ladder after *him*, for all the rest ain't fit to tie his shoes.

Valère.

He is a man who has done marvellous cures.

Lucas.

On folks that were dead, they say.

Valère.

He is a little capricious, as I told you; and sometimes he has moments when he is off his head, and does n't seem to be that which he really is.

LUCAS.

Yes, and he loves to joke; indeed, as one might say, saving your presence, he ain't quite right in his top story.

VALÈRE.

But, in reality, he is all science; and he often says the most exalted things.

LUCAS.

Yes, when he chooses, he can talk right off, just like a book.

VALÈRE.

His reputation is already spread about, and all the folks are flocking to consult him.

GÉRONTE.

I am most desirous of meeting him. Bring him here quickly.

VALÈRE.

I'll go fetch him now.

SCENE SECOND

GÉRONTE, JACQUELINE, LUCAS

JACQUELINE.

My word for it, monsieu, this one will do exactly like the rest. 'T will be, you'll see,

just six of one and half a dozen of the other. The wisest medicine you can give your daughter is, to my mind, a good and handsome husband for whom she has a liking.

Géronte.

Yah! my good nurse, you meddle far too much.

Lucas.

Wife Jacqueline, hold your tongue; it is n't for you to poke your nose in that.

Jacqueline.

I tell you both that all these doctors' stuff won't do no better for her than common water. Your daughter wants something else than rhubarb, salts, and senna; a husband is a poultice for all the ills of girls.

Géronte.

But with this strange infirmity, she is not in a condition for any man to take her. Besides, when I desired to marry her did she not oppose my will?

Jacqueline.

Yes, I should think she did! You tried to thrust upon her a man she can't abide. Why not have taken that Monsieur Léandre, who has touched her heart? She 'd have obeyed you

then. I'll warrant you he'll take her now, just as she is, if you will give her to him.

GÉRONTE.

But Léandre is not what I want; he has no property, like Horace.

JACQUELINE.

He has an uncle who is very rich, and he's his heir.

GÉRONTE.

All wealth to come is rubbish, as I think. Nothing is real but what one has in hand. I should run great risk of being fooled if I reckoned on possessions owned by another man. Death does not open its ears to the hopes and claims of heirs; there's time to cut one's wisdom teeth while waiting to enjoy a dead man's money.

JACQUELINE.

Well, I've always heard it said that in marriage, as in most things else, contentment's better than riches. Fathers and mothers have a cursèd custom of asking, "How much has he?" "How much has she?" There's old Pierre, who married his Simonette to that fat Thomas for a puncheon of wine that he had more than Robin, whom she liked; and there's the poor

thing now, as yellow as a quince, who has never had a happy day since then. That's a fine warning for you, monsieur. There's nothing good in this world but what we want. I'd rather give *my* daughter a husband that she likes than all the rents of all the farms in Beauce.

GÉRONTE.

Confound it! madame nurse, how you do rattle on! Please hold your tongue. You fret yourself too much; your milk will turn.

LUCAS, *striking, at each sentence, on Géronte's shoulder.*

Hold your tongue, I say; you're a saucy thing. Monsieu don't want your talk; he knows what he's about. Suckle your baby, and don't argue. Monsieu is the father of his daughter; he's good and wise, and sees what's best to do.

GÉRONTE.

Gently, gently! oh!

LUCAS, *striking harder still.*

Monsieu, I want to mortify her, and teach her the respect she ought to show you.

GÉRONTE.

Yes; but these gestures are not necessary.

## SCENE THIRD

VALÈRE, SGANARELLE, GÉRONTE, LUCAS, JACQUELINE

VALÈRE.

Monsieur, prepare yourself; the doctor has arrived.

GÉRONTE, *going towards Sganarelle.*

Monsieur, I am delighted to see you in my house. We need you very much.

SGANARELLE, *in a doctor's robe, and a very pointed hat.*

Hippocrates has said — that we should both keep on our hats.

GÉRONTE.

Hippocrates, did he say that?

SGANARELLE.

Yes.

GÉRONTE.

In which chapter, if you please?

SGANARELLE.

In his chapter upon — hats.

GÉRONTE.

Ah! if Hippocrates said that, it must be done.

Sganarelle.

And now, physician, having heard of the marvellous things —

Géronte.

To whom are you speaking, if you please?

Sganarelle.

To you.

Géronte.

But I am not a doctor.

Sganarelle.

You are not a doctor?

Géronte.

No, indeed!

Sganarelle.

Do you really mean it?

Géronte.

I really mean it. (*Sganarelle takes his stick and beats him.*) Ahi! ahi! ahi!

Sganarelle.

Well, you're a doctor now; that's *my* diploma.

Géronte, *to Valère.*

What devil of a man is this you've brought me?

VALÈRE.

I told you he was odd.

GÉRONTE.

Yes, but I shall send him marching with his oddities.

LUCAS.

Oh! please don't mind him, monsieu; that 's only fun.

GÉRONTE.

It is fun I do not like.

SGANARELLE.

Monsieur, I beg your pardon for the liberty that I have taken.

GÉRONTE.

Your servant, monsieur.

SGANARELLE.

I am sorry —

GÉRONTE.

It is nothing.

SGANARELLE.

For the blows —

GÉRONTE.

No consequence at all.

SGANARELLE.

That I have had the honor to give you.

GÉRONTE.

Say no more. Monsieur, I have a daughter, who is attacked by a most singular malady.

SGANARELLE.

I am delighted, monsieur, that your daughter has need of me; and I wish with all my heart that you required me, too, you and your whole family, that I might give testimony to the desire which I have to serve you.

GÉRONTE.

I am obliged to you, monsieur, for those sentiments.

SGANARELLE.

I assure you that I say them from the bottom of my soul.

GÉRONTE.

You do me too much honor.

SGANARELLE.

What is your daughter's name?

GÉRONTE.

Lucinde.

SGANARELLE.

Ha! a fine name to physic! Lucinde!

GÉRONTE.

I 'll go and see what she is doing now.

SGANARELLE.

Tell me, if you please, who is that tall woman over there?

GÉRONTE.

That is the wet-nurse of my infant boy.

## SCENE FOURTH

SGANARELLE, JACQUELINE, LUCAS

SGANARELLE.

The deuce! a pretty bit of furniture she is! (*Aloud*) Well, nurse, most charming nurse, my medicine is the very humble slave of your wet-nursing, and I should like to be the lucky brat who seeks the milk of your good graces. (*Puts his arm round her shoulders.*) All my remedies, all my science, all my capacities are at your service, and —

LUCAS.

With your permission, doctor, let my wife alone, if you please.

SGANARELLE.

Ah! is she your wife?

LUCAS.

Yes.

SGANARELLE.

I did not know it; nevertheless I am rejoiced for the sake of both of you.

(*Pretends to embrace Lucas, but kisses Jacqueline.*)

LUCAS, *pulling Sganarelle away and standing before his wife.*

Gently, if you please.

SGANARELLE.

I assure you I am delighted at your union. I congratulate your wife on having a husband such as you, and I congratulate you on having a wife so handsome, so virtuous, and so well-made.

(*Pretends to embrace Lucas, who opens his arms, under which he slips and kisses Jacqueline.*)

LUCAS, *pulling him away again.*

Hey! no such compliments, I tell you.

Sganarelle.

Don't you wish me to rejoice with you in such a fine companionship?

Lucas.

With me as much as you like, but with my wife a truce to saremony.

Sganarelle.

I take an equal pleasure in the happiness of both, and if to testify my joy I now embrace the husband, I must also embrace the wife to testify the same. (*Continues the same play.*)

Lucas, *pulling him away for the third time.*

Ha! the devil! monsieu, a plague on all this stuff!

## SCENE FIFTH

Géronte, Sganarelle, Lucas, Jacqueline

Géronte.

Monsieur, my daughter will be brought here in a moment.

Sganarelle.

I await her, monsieur, with all my medicines.

GÉRONTE.

Where are they?

SGANARELLE, *tapping his forehead.*

There.

GÉRONTE.

Ah! very good. Here comes my daughter.

## SCENE SIXTH

LUCINDE, GÉRONTE, SGANARELLE, VALÈRE, LUCAS, JACQUELINE

SGANARELLE.

Is this the patient?

GÉRONTE.

Yes. This is my only daughter; and it would be to me the deepest grief if she should die.

SGANARELLE.

She must beware of that! People can't die without the doctor's order.

GÉRONTE.

Here! bring chairs!

SGANARELLE, *seated between Géronte and Lucinde.*

This is a patient who is not at all disgusting; I think a healthy man could willingly put up with this disease.

GÉRONTE.

Why! you have made her smile, monsieur.

SGANARELLE.

So much the better. When a physician makes a patient laugh it is an admirable sign. (*To Lucinde*) Now tell me your trouble. What is the matter with you? Where do you feel the pain?

LUCINDE, *making signs by putting her hand to her mouth, to her head, and under her chin.*

Han, hi, hon, han.

SGANARELLE.

What 's that you say?

LUCINDE, *making the same gestures.*

Han, hi, hon, han, han, hi, hon.

SGANARILLE.

What?

LUCINDE.

Han, hi, hon.

SGANARELLE, *imitating her.*

Han, hi, hon, han, ha. I don't understand. What devil of a language is this?

GÉRONTE.

Monsieur, that is her disease. She has lately become speechless without our being able to ascertain the cause. It is this circumstance that has postponed her marriage.

SGANARELLE.

Why so?

GÉRONTE.

Because the man who is to marry her wishes to await her cure before concluding the affair.

SGANARELLE.

And who is this fool who does not want a speechless wife? Would to God that mine had this disease; I'd take good care that *she* should not be cured.

GÉRONTE.

Well, monsieur, we entreat you to employ your utmost skill to cure my daughter.

SGANARELLE.

Ah! don't you trouble about that. Tell me a little more. Does this ailment, this disease of hers oppress her much?

GÉRONTE.

Yes, monsieur.

SGANARELLE.

So much the better. Does she suffer pain?

GÉRONTE.

Yes, very great.

SGANARELLE.

Hum! that is well. Does she go — you know where?

GÉRONTE.

Yes.

SGANARELLE, *turning to the patient.*

Give me your arm. (*To Géronte*) Here is a pulse which tells me plainly that your daughter is mute.

GÉRONTE.

Yes, monsieur, yes, that is her disease. You have at once discovered it!

SGANARELLE.

Ha! ha!

JACQUELINE.

Just see how quick he is to guess the trouble!

SGANARELLE.

We great doctors — *we* know things at once. An ignorant practitioner would surely have been

puzzled and said: 'T is this, 't is that; but I, I lay my finger on the ill at once and tell you plainly, monsieur, that your girl is mute.

GÉRONTE.

Yes, but I would like that you should also tell me from what it comes.

SGANARELLE.

Nothing is easier. It comes from her having lost the use of speech.

GÉRONTE.

True; but the cause; will you please to tell me what has made her lose the use of speech?

SGANARELLE.

All our leading authors will inform you that it is through an impediment to the action of the tongue.

GÉRONTE.

But still, I would like you to give me your opinion on this impediment to the action of the tongue.

SGANARELLE.

Aristotle says on that point — various fine things.

GÉRONTE.

I can well believe it.

SGANARELLE.

Ah! what a great man Aristotle was!

GÉRONTE.

Undoubtedly.

SGANARELLE.

Yes, a great man indeed (*lifting his arm*); greater than I by *that*. But, to return to our argument; I consider that this impediment to the action of the tongue is caused by certain humors which we learned men and men of science call morbid humors; morbid, that is to say — morbid humors; inasmuch as the vapors formed by the exhalations of the influences which arise in the regions of diseases, coming, so to speak, from — Do you understand Latin?

GÉRONTE.

No, not a word.

SGANARELLE, *rising.*

You don't understand Latin?

GÉRONTE.

No.

SGANARELLE, *taking various droll postures as he speaks.*

*Cabricias, arci thuram, catalamus, singulariter, nominativo, hæc musa,* the muse, *bonus,*

*bona, bonum. Deus sanctus, est-ne oratio latinas? Etiam*, yes. *Quare?* why? *Quia substantivo et adjectivum concordat in generi, numerum, et casus.*

Géronte.

Ah! why did I never study?

Jacqueline.

Just hear that clever man!

Lucas.

Yes, 't is all so fine I can't make out one word he says.

Sganarelle.

Now these vapors that I spoke of, having passed from the left side, on which is the liver, to the right side, on which is the heart, it happens that the lung, which we call in Latin *armyan*, having communication with the brain, which in Greek is *nasmus*, by means of the hollow vein, called in Hebrew *cubile*, meets on its passage the said vapors which fill the ventricles of the omoplate, because the said vapors — understand this reasoning, I beg of you — because the said vapors have a certain malignity — listen to this, I conjure you —

Géronte.

Yes.

SGANARELLE.

Have a certain malignity, which is caused — attention, if you please —

GÉRONTE.

I am attending.

SGANARELLE.

Which is caused by the acridity of the humors engendered in the concavity of the diaphragm. It results that these vapors — *Ossabandus, nequeis, nequer, potarinum, quipsa milus.* Now that is precisely the reason why your daughter is mute.

JACQUELINE.

Oh! how fine he says all that, dear man!

LUCAS.

I wish my tongue could swing like his.

GÉRONTE.

Nothing could be better argued, I am sure. There is only one thing that puzzles me; I mean the places of the heart and liver. It seems to me you put them otherwise than as they are; the heart is on the left side, the liver on the right.

SGANARELLE.

Yes, formerly they were so; but we have changed all that. We practise medicine now-a-days on quite another system.

GÉRONTE.

Ah! I was not aware of that; I beg your pardon for my ignorance.

SGANARELLE.

No harm at all; you are not expected to be as wise as we.

GÉRONTE.

No, of course not. But, monsieur, what think you should be done to cure this illness?

SGANARELLE.

What *I* think ought to be done?

GÉRONTE.

Yes, what is your advice?

SGANARELLE.

My advice is to put her to bed, and make her take great quantities of bread sopped in wine as a remedy.

GÉRONTE.

Why that prescription, monsieur?

SGANARELLE.

Because in wine and bread mingled together there is a sympathetic virtue which loosens the tongue. Have you never noticed that this is the food they give to parrots, which learn to talk by eating nothing else?

GÉRONTE.

Yes, that is true. Ah! how great a man he is! Quick! bring quantities of wine and bread.

SGANARELLE.

I shall return this evening, to see the condition in which she is.

## SCENE SEVENTH

GÉRONTE, SGANARELLE, JACQUELINE

SGANARELLE, *to Jacqueline.*

You, I want you. (*To Géronte*) Here, monsieur, is your wet-nurse, to whom I ought to give some remedies.

JACQUELINE.

Who? I? but I 'm quite well.

SGANARELLE.

• So much the worse, nurse, so much the worse. Fine health is always to be dreaded; it won't be bad to bring you down by a nice little gentle bleeding, and give you, now and then, a soothing enema.

GÉRONTE.

But, monsieur, this is a treatment that I do not understand. Why should you bleed a person who has no illness?

SGANARELLE.

Ah! that 's no matter. 'T is salutary treatment; just as we drink to check our coming thirst, so we should bleed to check a coming illness.

JACQUELINE, *departing*.

Goodness! I just scoff at that! Do you think I 'd make *my* body an apothecary's shop!

SGANARELLE.

You are restive under remedies, but *I* know how to bring you down to reason.

## SCENE EIGHTH

GÉRONTE, SGANARELLE

SGANARELLE.

I bid you now good-day.

GÉRONTE.

No, wait a moment, if you please.

SGANARELLE.

What do you want with me?

GÉRONTE.

To give you money, monsieur.

SGANARELLE, *putting out his hand from under his robe, but holding it behind him while Géronte takes out his purse.*

I shall not take your money, monsieur.

GÉRONTE.

Monsieur —

SGANARELLE.

No, impossible.

GÉRONTE.

One moment —

SGANARELLE.

On no account.

GÉRONTE.

I beg of you !

SGANARELLE.

You are joking.

GÉRONTE.

But here it is.

SGANARELLE.

I shall do nothing with it.

GÉRONTE.

Hey ! There !

SGANARELLE.

'T is not for money that I act.

GÉRONTE.

That I can well believe.

SGANARELLE, *after taking the money.*

Is it full weight ?

GÉRONTE.

Yes, monsieur, yes.

SGANARELLE.

I am not a mercenary doctor.

GÉRONTE.

I know that well.

SGANARELLE.

Self-interest does not rule me.

GÉRONTE, *leaving him.*

I never thought it did.

SGANARELLE, *alone, looking at the money.*

Bless me! 'tis not a bad beginning, and provided —

## SCENE NINTH

LÉANDRE, SGANARELLE

LÉANDRE.

Monsieur, I have been long awaiting you. I come to implore your help.

SGANARELLE, *seizing his wrist.*

You have a pulse that is very bad indeed.

LÉANDRE.

No, monsieur, I am not ill; it is not for myself that I have come.

SGANARELLE.

If you are not ill, then what the devil have you got to say?

Léandre.

Monsieur, to tell you the matter briefly, I am Léandre, and I love Lucinde, on whom you have paid a visit; and as, by the unkindness of her father, all access to her presence is denied me, I venture to entreat your help and ask you to assist us in carrying out a stratagem by which I hope to say to her a word on which my life and happiness depend.

Sganarelle, *appearing to be angry.*

For whom, then, do you take me? What! do you dare address yourself to me to serve your love? Would you degrade the dignity of a doctor to an employment of that nature?

Léandre.

Monsieur, I beg of you, don't speak so loud.

Sganarelle, *pushing him back.*

I choose to speak out loud. You are a most impertinent fellow.

Léandre.

Hush, monsieur, — softly.

Sganarelle.

An ill-advised —

LÉANDRE.

For heaven's sake!

SGANARELLE.

I'll teach you that I am not a man for such proceedings; your insolence is outrageous —

LÉANDRE, *taking out his purse.*

Monsieur —

SGANARELLE.

To endeavor to employ me — (*Takes the purse.*) I am not speaking now of you, monsieur; *you* are an honest man, and I should be most willing to do you any service; but there are in this world insolent wretches who persist in taking people for what they are not; and I will own to you, that makes me angry.

LÉANDRE.

I beg your pardon, monsieur, for the liberty I take, but —

SGANARELLE.

Oh! you are jesting. Now tell me, what's in question.

LÉANDRE.

Well, monsieur, you must know that this disease which you are called upon to cure is only feigned. Doctors have argued over it as usual.

They said it came, some from the brain, some from the stomach, others from the spleen, and several from the liver; but the real fact is this: that love is the true cause; Lucinde has feigned this malady to escape a hated marriage she was importuned to make. — But, for fear that we be seen together, let us retire; and I will tell you, as we walk along, what it is that I desire you to do for us.

SGANARELLE.

Well, monsieur, well; you have inspired me with a tender feeling for your love which is truly inconceivable; I 'll lose my reputation and the patient shall expire, or else, she shall be yours.

END OF SECOND ACT.

## Act Third

The stage represents a street near Géronte's house.

### SCENE FIRST

LÉANDRE, SGANARELLE

LÉANDRE.

IT seems to me, dressed up like this, I am not a bad apothecary; and as the father has never seen me, this change of hat and wig is quite enough to disguise me from his knowledge.

SGANARELLE.

Of course it is.

LÉANDRE.

Still, I need to know some five or six imposing medical words to decorate my remarks, and give me an air of learning.

SGANARELLE.

Oh! bless you! that's not necessary; the coat's enough; and I don't know a thing about this business more than you.

LÉANDRE.

What?

Sganarelle.

The devil take me if I understand one word of medicine or of doctoring. You are a worthy fellow, and I am quite willing to confide in you as you confide in me.

Léandre.

But do you mean to say that you are not —

Sganarelle.

No, I tell you, no. They have made me a doctor in spite of myself. I never in my life set up to be so learned; in all my schooling I never got above the lowest form. I 'm sure I don't know why this notion took them; but when I found they meant, by force, that I should be a doctor, I resolved at once to be one, at the cost of all concerned. But you would never believe how this mistake has spread, and how devilishly they 're set on making me out a man of skill. People from all the country round are after me, and if this thing goes on, I begin to think I 'll stay a doctor all my life. I find it the best trade a man can follow; for whether he does well or whether he does ill, he 's paid the same. The harm that 's done never falls back on us, and we can chop, just as we please, into the stuff on

which we work. The man who makes our shoes can't spoil a scrap of leather but he pays the damage; while we can ruin a man for life and it costs us nothing. Blunders are none of ours; they are always, don't you see, the fault of him who dies. And the best of all in our profession is that the dead are so discreet; they never make complaints and say the doctors killed them.

LÉANDRE.

True; the dead are certainly most worthy folk in that respect.

SGANARELLE, *seeing some men approaching.*

Here come some fellows who look as if they wanted to consult me. Go and wait for me down there, near to your Lucinde's house.

## SCENE SECOND

THIBAUD, PERRIN, SGANARELLE

THIBAUD.

Monsieu, we 've come in search o' you, my son Perrin and I.

SGANARELLE.

What for?

THIBAUD.

His poor mother, whose name 's Parrette, is in her bed these six months.

SGANARELLE, *holding out his hand as if to receive money.*

Well, what do you want that I should do about it?

THIBAUD.

I want you, monsieu, just to fix us up some little mess to cure her.

SGANARELLE.

But I must first know what 's the matter with her.

THIBAUD.

She 's sick o' the hypocrisy, monsieu.

SGANARELLE.

Hypocrisy?

THIBAUD.

Yes; that 's to say she 's swollen up, and the doctors tell that there 's a lot o' seriousness inside of her, and that her liver, or stomach, or spleen, just as you please to call it, makes only water i'stead o' blood. Every other day she has the quart and ager, with aches and pains in all her jints; and most times one can hear the

flame in her throat as if 't would choke her; and besides all that, she often gits what *you* call sincobs and convarsions, so that I think she 's gone. We 've got an apothecary in our village who has given her, speaking riverent, the Lord knows how many physics; I know I 've paid him a dozen or more good silver crowns for infections, and, saving your presence, postumes and purgatees and caudal potions. But all that, as t'other man now tells me, ain't no more good nor nothing; and this one wants to try her with a drug they call the wine of all the money. But for my part I 'm afeared o' that, for they do say these big doctors have killed I don't know how many folk with that invention.

SGANARELLE, *still holding out his hand and shaking it to show he wanted money.*

Come to facts, my friend, come to facts.

THIBAUD.

Well, the fact is, monsieu, that I 've come here to ask you to tell me what to do about her.

SGANARELLE.

I don't understand you at all.

PERRIN.

Monsieu, my mother is ill; and here 's two

crowns that we've brought you to pay for dosing her.

Sganarelle.

Ah! I understand you now. Here's a lad who can speak plain and tell the things he should. You say your mother is ill of the hypocrisy, and her body is all swollen, and she has a fever with pains in her legs, and sometimes syncopes and convulsions — that means fainting-fits.

Perrin.

Yes, monsieur, you're right; that's just what's the matter with her.

Sganarelle.

You see I understood the case at once from what you said. You have a father who doesn't know how to speak. And now you want a remedy, do you?

Perrin.

Yes, monsieu, if you please.

Sganarelle.

A remedy to cure her?

Perrin.

That's what I mean.

SGANARELLE.

Well, here's a bit of cheese which you must make her take.

PERRIN.

Cheese, monsieu!

SGANARELLE.

Yes, medicated cheese; in which there enters gold and coral and pearls and — other precious things.

PERRIN.

Monsieu, we are very much obliged to you. I 'll make her swallow them at once.

SGANARELLE.

Now go. If she should die, you must not fail to bury her the best you can.

## SCENE THIRD

The scene has changed and represents, as in the second act, a room in Géronte's house.

JACQUELINE, SGANARELLE; LUCAS, *at back of stage*

SGANARELLE.

Here 's the handsome nurse! Ha! nurse of my heart! I am enchanted to meet you; the

very sight of you is rhubarb, salts, and senna which purge away the sadness of my soul.

Jacqueline.

Oh ! bless us, monsieur, that 's too fine talk for me. I don't understand one word of all your Latin.

Sganarelle.

Nurse ! be ill, I implore you, be ill for love of me. I should have all the joys of earth in curing you.

Jacqueline.

Your servant, monsieur; but I 'd prefer *not* being cured.

Sganarelle.

How I pity you, beautiful nurse, for having such a jealous and annoying husband as that of yours.

Jacqueline.

How can I help it, monsieur? He 's the penance of my sins. Where the goat is tethered, you know, there she must browse.

Sganarelle.

What ! such an oaf as that ! — a fellow who is always on the watch, and won't let a person speak to you.

JACQUELINE.

Alas! you have n't seen nothing yet; *this* is only a mere scrap of his bad temper.

SGANARELLE.

Is it possible? Can a man have a soul so base as to ill-treat a woman such as you? I know *some*, beautiful nurse, and they are not so far from here just now, who would be too joyful only to kiss the tips of your pretty little toes. Ah! why should a person made like you fall into the hands of a man like him, an animal, a brute, a stupid fool, an idiot — excuse me, beautiful nurse, if I speak thus of your husband.

JACQUELINE.

Hey! monsieur, don't I know best how well he deserves those names?

SGANARELLE.

Yes, nurse, yes, he deserves them; and what is more, he deserves that you should stick something on his head to punish him for the suspicions he entertains.

JACQUELINE.

'T is true that if I had n't anything before my eyes but his good pleasure, he might oblige me to do strange things.

SGANARELLE.

Faith, you would do well now to avenge yourself upon him. He 's a man, I tell you, who deserves it; and if I were happy enough, beautiful nurse, to be chosen by you to —

(*While Sganarelle opens his arms to embrace Jacqueline, Lucas pops his head beneath them and comes between the two. Sganarelle and Jacqueline look at Lucas, and each turns away, — the doctor in a very droll manner.*)

## SCENE FOURTH

GÉRONTE, LUCAS

GÉRONTE.

Holà, Lucas, have you seen our doctor?

LUCAS.

Yes, by all the devils, I have seen him, and my wife too.

GÉRONTE.

Where can he be?

LUCAS.

I don't know; but I 'd like him to be at the bottom of the river.

GÉRONTE.

Go and see what my daughter is about.

SCENE FIFTH

SGANARELLE, LÉANDRE, GÉRONTE

GÉRONTE.

Ah! monsieur, I was asking where you were.

SGANARELLE.

I was in your courtyard, amusing myself down there. How is our patient?

GÉRONTE.

She is rather worse since taking your remedy.

SGANARELLE.

So much the better, that's a sign it operates.

GÉRONTE.

Yes, but in operating I have some fear that it may choke her.

SGANARELLE.

Don't disturb yourself, for I have remedies that laugh at everything; they'd cure her on her dying bed.

GÉRONTE, *pointing to Léandre.*

Who is that man you have brought here with you?

SGANARELLE, *making signs with his fingers to indicate an apothecary.*

He is —

GÉRONTE.

What?

SGANARELLE.

He —

GÉRONTE.

Well?

SGANARELLE.

Whom —

GÉRONTE.

I am listening.

SGANARELLE.

Your daughter needs.

## SCENE SIXTH

LUCINDE, GÉRONTE, LÉANDRE, JACQUELINE, SGANARELLE

JACQUELINE.

Monsieur, here's your daughter, who says she wants to walk.

SGANARELLE.

Well, it will do her good. Go you, master apothecary, and feel her pulse, so that you and I may discuss her illness later. (*He draws Géronte apart, passing his arm around his*

*shoulder, and every time that Géronte turns to see what his daughter and the apothecary are doing, Sganarelle twitches him round again; all the while talking as follows to divert his attention:*)

Monsieur, 't is a great and subtle question among doctors to know whether women are easier to cure than men. I beg you to listen to this, if you please. Some say no, others say yes; I say both yes and no; inasmuch as the incongruity of opaque humors, which are met with in the natural temperament of women, being the reason why the animal part asserts its influence over the sensibilities, we see that the uncertainty of their opinions depends on the oblique movement of the circuit of the moon; and, like the sun, which casts its rays on the concavity of the earth, finds —

LUCINDE, *to Léandre.*

No, I am not capable of changing my feelings.

GÉRONTE.

My daughter speaks! Oh! the great virtue of your remedy! Oh! admirable doctor! How grateful I am to you, monsieur, for this marvellous cure. What can I ever do for you in return for such a service?

Sganarelle, *marching up and down and fanning himself with his hat.*

This is a malady which has given me great trouble.

Lucinde.

Yes, father, I have recovered my speech; but only to tell you I will never have any husband but Léandre, and it is useless for you to give me Horace.

Géronte.

But —

Lucinde.

Nothing can ever shake my resolution.

Géronte.

What?

Lucinde.

In vain will you oppose your reasons.

Géronte.

If —

Lucinde.

All you can say will avail you nothing.

Géronte.

I —

Lucinde.

'T is a thing on which I am determined.

Géronte.

But —

LUCINDE.

No paternal power on earth can move me against my will.

GÉRONTE.

I have —

LUCINDE.

You may try every effort.

GÉRONTE.

He —

LUCINDE.

My heart refuses to submit to such a tyranny.

GÉRONTE.

But —

LUCINDE, *in a deafening tone of voice.*

No. Never. Say no more. You 'll waste your time. I will not do it; I am determined.

GÉRONTE.

Heavens! what impetuosity of speech! Is there no means of stopping it? (*To Sganarelle*) Monsieur, I beg of you to make her mute once more.

SGANARELLE.

No, that is quite impossible. All that I could do of any service would be to make you deaf, and if you wish —

GÉRONTE.

I thank you, no. (*To Lucinde*) Do you expect —

LUCINDE.

No, all your reasonings cannot touch my soul.

GÉRONTE.

You shall marry Horace this very night.

LUCINDE.

I will sooner marry death.

SGANARELLE, *to Géronte.*

Good heavens! monsieur, stop! Leave me to medicate this matter. 'T is a disease which now controls her, and I know the remedy which should be applied.

GÉRONTE.

Can it be possible that you should also cure diseases of the mind?

SGANARELLE.

Yes; leave me to act. I 've remedies for all, and this apothecary here can greatly help us to effect the cure. (*To Léandre*) One word. You see that the ardor which she has for this Léandre is wholly contrary to her father's wishes. There is no time to lose; these humors are most bitter; we must at once proceed to find

a remedy, or the evil may get worse by more delay. I see, for my part, only one sure means, and that is: the taking of a purgative flight, which you must mix, in proper manner, with two scruples of matrimonium, in pills. Perhaps she may offer some resistance to this remedy; but if you are an able man in your profession it is for you to solve that difficulty, and make her swallow the dose as best you can. Take her to walk about the garden and so prepare her humors, while I stay here to discourse a little with her father — But don't lose time; quick to your remedy; 't is a specific.

## SCENE SEVENTH

GÉRONTE, SGANARELLE

GÉRONTE.

Monsieur, what drugs were those that you prescribed? It seems to me I have never heard them mentioned.

SGANARELLE.

They are drugs we only use in certain urgent cases.

GÉRONTE.

Did you ever see such insolence as hers?

SGANARELLE.

Girls, you know, are often rather obstinate.

GÉRONTE.

You can't imagine how she dotes on that Léandre.

SGANARELLE.

The heat of the blood does that in youth.

GÉRONTE.

As for me, the moment I discovered the violence of this passion, I locked her up.

SGANARELLE.

You did wisely.

GÉRONTE.

I prevented all possible communication between them.

SGANARELLE.

That was right.

GÉRONTE.

Some folly would have happened had I allowed them even once to see each other.

SGANARELLE.

No doubt.

GÉRONTE.

I think she is a girl to run away with him.

SGANARELLE.

You judge correctly.

GÉRONTE.

I have been warned that he has lately made attempts to see her.

SGANARELLE.

Oh! what a rascal!

GÉRONTE.

Well, he will only waste his time.

SGANARELLE.

Ha! ha!

GÉRONTE.

I shall prevent his ever seeing her.

SGANARELLE.

He has no fool to deal with; you know a rope or two that he won't know. He'll have to get up early to catch you napping.

## SCENE EIGHTH

LUCAS, GÉRONTE, SGANARELLE

LUCAS.

Ha! monsieur, here's a rumpus! Your daughter Lucinde has run away with her Lé-

andre. 'T was he was that apothecary; and this doctor here helped in the operation.

GÉRONTE.

What! cut my throat in that way? Here! the police! Don't let him get away! Ha! villain, I 'll have you punished by the law.

## SCENE NINTH

MARTINE, LUCAS, SGANARELLE

MARTINE, *to Lucas.*

Goodness! what trouble I have had to find this house. Tell me some news about that doctor to whom I sent you.

LUCAS.

He 's to be hung.

MARTINE.

What! my husband hung? Alas! and what has he done to deserve it?

LUCAS.

He has helped a man to run away with our master's daughter.

MARTINE, *seeing Sganarelle.*

Alas! my dear husband! is it true that they are going to hang you?

SGANARELLE.

So they say. Oh! Oh!

MARTINE.

Will you let yourself die in presence of all these people?

SGANARELLE.

How can I help it?

MARTINE.

If you had only finished chopping our wood I might have found some little consolation.

SGANARELLE.

Do go away from here; you wring my heart.

MARTINE.

No, I shall stay to encourage you to die. I shall not leave you till I see you hung.

SCENE TENTH

GÉRONTE, SGANARELLE, MARTINE

GÉRONTE, *to Sganarelle.*

The police will be here in a minute, and they will put you in some place where you will be secure.

Sganarelle, *on his knees, hat in hand.*

Alas! can't it be changed into blows with a stick?

Géronte.

No; justice forbids — But what is this I see?

## SCENE ELEVENTH

Géronte, Lucinde, Léandre, Sganarelle, Lucas, Martine

Léandre.

Monsieur, I appear before you as Léandre; and I place Lucinde in your power. We did intend to run away and marry one another, but this intention has given place to one more honorable; I desire not to rob you of your daughter, but to receive her from your willing hand. What I have come to say is this, monsieur: I have this moment received a letter, from which I learn my uncle is deceased and I am heir to all his fortune.

Géronte.

Monsieur, your virtue seems to me most eminent. I give my daughter to you with the greatest joy.

SGANARELLE, *aside.*

Hi! what a narrow escape for medicine!

MARTINE.

Inasmuch as you are not to be hung, thank me, if you please, for making you a doctor. 'T was I who got that honor for you.

SGANARELLE.

Ho! ho! 't was you who got me all those blows with a stick!

LÉANDRE, *to Sganarelle.*

But the result is much too fine to keep your anger.

SGANARELLE.

True. (*To Martine*) I forgive you the beatings I received in favor of the dignity to which you have raised me. But prepare henceforth to live in awe of a man of my consequence; and remember that the anger of a doctor is more to be dreaded than people imagine.

END OF LE MÉDECIN MALGRÉ LUI.

# LA CRITIQUE DE L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES

(Critique of The School for Wives)

Comedy

IN ONE ACT

## PERSONAGES

URANIE.
ÉLISE.
CLIMÈNE.
THE MARQUIS.
DORANTE, *the Chevalier.*
LYSIDAS, *poet.*
GALOPIN, *lacquey.*

The scene is in Paris, at the house of Uranie.

# LA CRITIQUE DE L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES

## SCENE FIRST

URANIE, ÉLISE

URANIE.

WHAT! cousin, has no one come to visit you?

ÉLISE.

No, not a soul.

URANIE.

Really, it does surprise me that we both have been alone all day.

ÉLISE.

Well, I 'm surprised myself, for 'tis not customary; your house, thank God, is the usual refuge of all the idlers of the court.

URANIE.

To tell the truth, to me the afternoon seemed *very* long.

ÉLISE.

And I, I thought it short.

URANIE.

Fine minds, they say, love solitude.

ÉLISE.

Fine minds indeed! You know it was not that I meant.

URANIE.

Well, as for me, I own that I like company.

ÉLISE.

I like it too, but then I like it choice. The quantity of silly visits one has to endure among the rest is often the very reason why I like to be alone.

URANIE.

Delicacy can only bear the presence of those who are refined.

ÉLISE.

People are too compliant in tolerating with composure all sorts of persons.

URANIE.

Well, I enjoy the wise, but I divert myself with all the silly ones.

ÉLISE.

Yes, but the silly ones do not get far before they bore you; most of them are not amusing on their second visit. But, apropos of silly people, will you not rid me of your troublesome marquis? You can't expect to leave him on my hands forever, or that I will long endure his everlasting punning.

URANIE.

Punning is all the fashion; they think it wit at court.

ÉLISE.

Alas for those who strain all day to talk such empty jargon. A fine thing truly to drag old jokes, raked from the mud of markets and the Place Maubert, into the palace conversations! A pretty style of wit for courtiers! And what a mind a man displays when he remarks: "Madame, you may be in the Place Royale, but all the world, regarding you *de bon œil*, thinks you are three leagues out of Paris," simply because Bonneuil is a village three leagues distant. How very witty! and how

gallant! No wonder those who invent such speeches boast of them.

URANIE.

But they don't call it wit; for most of those who affect that style of language know 't is silly.

ÉLISE.

All the worse therefore to take such pains to be so silly and make themselves such sorry jesters knowingly. I think them the less excusable, and if *I* were judge of the world I know well to what I would condemn such punsters and their like.

URANIE.

Well, let us drop the matter, which nettles you too much. Dorante is late, I think, for the supper we agreed to take together.

ÉLISE.

Perhaps he has forgotten it, and —

## SCENE SECOND

URANIE, ÉLISE, GALOPIN

GALOPIN.

Climène is here, madame, and asks to see you.

URANIE.

Oh, heaven! what a visit!

ÉLISE.

You grumbled because you were alone, and heaven has punished you.

URANIE, *to Galopin.*

Quick! go and tell her I am not at home.

GALOPIN.

She has been told already that you are.

URANIE.

What fool said that?

GALOPIN.

'T was I, madame.

URANIE.

The deuced little wretch! I 'll teach you to give answers from yourself.

GALOPIN.

Then I 'll go tell her, madame, that you say you are out.

URANIE.

Stop, you little animal! let her come up; the mischief 's done.

GALOPIN.

She is talking still to some one in the street.

URANIE, *to Élise.*

Ah! cousin, how this visit does annoy me! Just at this moment, too!

ÉLISE.

The lady is annoying in herself; I have always had a furious aversion to her, and, begging her quality's pardon, I think her the silliest fool that ever took to reasoning.

URANIE.

Your epithets are rather strong.

ÉLISE.

Well, she deserves them all, and more to boot if people did her justice. Is there a person more truly, what is called a *précieuse* — giving the word, of course, its worst significance.

URANIE.

She rejects that name, however.

ÉLISE.

She rejects the name but not the thing: for that is what she is, from head to foot; the most affected creature in the world. It really seems as though the structure of her body were out of

order, and that her hips, her head, her shoulders were jerked by springs. She affects that languid, silly tone of voice, purses her mouth to make you think it small, and rolls her eyes to make them larger.

URANIE.

Oh! gently, please; suppose she heard you?

ÉLISE.

No, she has not come up — I can't forget the night she wanted to see Damon, on the strength of his repute and the fine things the public say of him. You know the man, and his natural laziness in conversation. She invited him to supper as a wit, and never did he seem so stupid; the half-dozen persons she had gathered to enjoy his talk sat gazing at him with round eyes, as though he were a being not like others. They all considered he was there to feed them with bon-mots, and that every word that left his lips must be impromptu wit, if he but asked for drink. He fooled them all by silence, and my lady was as much displeased with him as I with her.

URANIE.

Hush, hush! I am going to receive her at the door.

Élise.

Stay, one word more. I 'd like to see her married to that marquis. What a pair 't would be — a punster and a *précieuse!*

Uranie.

Do be silent! here she comes.

## SCENE THIRD

Uranie, Élise, Climène, Galopin

Uranie.

Really, 't is very late —

Climène.

Oh! for pity's sake, my dear, give me a chair at once.

Uranie, *to Galopin.*

An armchair, quick!

Climène.

Ah, heavens!

Uranie.

What is it?

Climène.

I cannot bear it!

URANIE.

But what 's the matter?

CLIMÈNE.

My heart is failing!

URANIE.

Is it hysterics?

CLIMÈNE.

Oh! no, no.

URANIE.

Shall I unlace you?

CLIMÈNE.

Good heavens, no — Ah!

URANIE.

But where 's the pain? when did it seize you?

CLIMÈNE.

Three hours ago — at the Palais-Royal.[1]

URANIE.

How?

CLIMÈNE.

For my sins I went to see that wicked rhapsody "The School for Wives." I am fainting

[1] Moliere's troop was then playing at the Palais-Royal theatre.

still from the nausea that it gave me — I think that I shall not recover for weeks.

ÉLISE.

Just see how illness takes us unawares!

URANIE.

I don't know what our constitutions are, my cousin's and mine, but we both went to see that very play last night, and came back gay and healthy.

CLIMÈNE.

What! you have seen it?

URANIE.

Yes, and heard it too, from end to end.

CLIMÈNE.

My dear! and you did not go into convulsions?

URANIE.

I am not so delicate, thank God! For my part, I thought the comedy more like to cure its hearers than to hurt them.

CLIMÈNE.

Oh! how can you say so? How can a person with any revenue of common-sense put forth that proposition? You cannot, with impunity, fly in the face of reason. Come to the truth of

things; is there a soul so eager for jocosity that it can relish the mawkish stuff with which that comedy is seasoned? For myself, I own I could not find a grain of spice in all of it. "Children by the ear" is odious in taste, it seems to me; "cream-tarts" have made me sick; and as for that "soup" I thought to vomit.

Élise.

Heavens! how elegantly that is said! I thought myself the play was good, but madame's eloquence is so persuasive, she turns things in a manner so delightful, that we must all agree in sentiment with her, no matter what our own opinion is.

Uranie.

As for me, I am not so complying. To tell my honest thought, I think that comedy among the best the author has produced.

Climène.

Ah! when you say that you make me pity you; I can't endure that you should have such poor discernment. How can any one, possessing virtue, find pleasure in a play which keeps our modesty forever in alarm and soils the imagination constantly.

ÉLISE.

How charmingly she puts it! You are indeed a cruel critic, madame; I pity that poor Molière who has you for an enemy.

CLIMÈNE, *to Uranie.*

Believe me, my dear, correct your judgment. For your own honor's sake, don't tell the world you liked that comedy.

URANIE.

I do not see what you can find there to offend your modesty.

CLIMÈNE.

Alas! the whole of it. I do maintain no honest woman can see that play without confusion, such filth have I discovered in it.

URANIE.

Then you have better eyes for filth than others; for my part, I saw none.

CLIMÈNE.

Because you *would* not see it, most assuredly; for all this nastiness, thank God, is openly displayed. There 's not the slightest veil to cover it; the boldest eyes are frightened at its nudity.

ÉLISE.

Ah!

CLIMÈNE.

He! he! he!

URANIE.

But will you please to show me a single specimen of all this filth?

CLIMÈNE.

Alas! can you really need to have it specified?

URANIE.

Yes; I ask you to name a single point that shocks you.

CLIMÈNE.

Can you want more than that scene with Agnes, when she tells Arnolphe what Horace has taken from her?

URANIE.

You think that foul?

CLIMÈNE.

Ah!

URANIE.

But tell me.

CLIMÈNE.

Fie!

URANIE.

I ask you again.

CLIMÈNE.

I can say nothing.

Uranie.

For my part, I see no harm in it.

Climène.

So much the worse for you.

Uranie.

So much the better, it seems to me. I look at things on the side they are shown to me; I do not twist them round to search for what I was not told to see.

Climène.

A woman's virtue —

Uranie.

A woman's virtue is not in cant. It ill becomes her to assume to be more virtuous than those who are truly virtuous. Affectation is worse in this particular matter than in others. I know nothing so riduculous as this super-sensitive virtue which finds evil everywhere, supposes criminal meaning in the most innocent words, and takes offence at shadows. Believe me, those who make this great ado are not considered better women. On the contrary, their whispering severity and their affected airs excite the censure of the world against the actions of their lives. People are charmed to find some blame

to put upon them. To give you an example: opposite to the box in which we sat to see this comedy were certain women who, by their behavior throughout the play, — hiding their faces, turning away their heads affectedly, — excited men to say a hundred slighting things about their conduct which would not have been said without it: one man, in fact, among the lacqueys called out quite loud that their ears were more chaste than the rest of their bodies.

Climène.

Then people must be blind, or make believe they do not see the things that are in the play.

Uranie.

They should not see the things that are not there.

Climène.

Well, I maintain once more, their nastiness affronts the eye.

Uranie.

And I repeat that I do not agree with you.

Climène.

Is your modesty not wounded by what Agnes says in the scene I named?

Uranie.

No, indeed not. She says no word that does not seem to me most virtuous; and if you find some other meaning under it, 't is you who make the filth, not she; she spoke and thought of a ribbon only.

Climène.

Ribbon indeed! but remember that *the*, on which she pauses — strange thoughts are in that *the*. That *the* is desperately scandalous, and, whatever you may say, you are not able to defend the insolence of that *the*.

Élise.

Cousin, 't is very true. I am on madame's side against that *the*. That *the* is insolent to the last degree; you are very wrong to defend that *the*.

Climène.

It breathes an obscenity that to me is quite unbearable.

Élise.

How do you pronounce that word, madame?

Climène.

Obscenity, madame.

Élise.

Ah ! obscenity. I don't know what the word may mean, but I think it very pretty.[1]

Climène, *to Uranie.*

There ! you see how your own blood decides against you.

Uranie.

Oh ! she is only talking; she is not saying what she thinks. Believe me, do not trust her.

Élise.

How malicious, cousin, to try to make madame distrust me ! Just see where I should be if she believed you ! I am not, surely, so unfortunate, madame, that you should have such thoughts of me?

Climène.

No, no; I don't rely upon her words; I think you more sincere than she pretends

Élise.

And you are right, madame; you do me justice when you think that I think you the most engaging person in the world; believe me, I

[1] The word [*obscénité*] was doubtless a new one, created by *les précieuses.* [Fr. ed.]

understand your sentiments and am truly charmed with all the expressions that issue from your lips.

CLIMÈNE.

Yes; what I say is wholly unaffected.

ÉLISE.

We see that plainly, madame; all is so natural in you — your words, your tones, your looks, your step, your motions, even your attire; each has an air of quality enchanting to observers. I study you with my eyes and ears; in fact I am so full of you I 'm like a monkey, and try to mimic you in various ways.

CLIMÈNE.

But you are laughing at me, madame.

ÉLISE.

Pardon me, madame; pray who would dream of laughing at you?

CLIMÈNE.

I am not a perfect model, madame.

ÉLISE.

Oh! yes, indeed you are!

CLIMÈNE.

You flatter me, madame.

ÉLISE.

No, not at all.

CLIMÈNE.

Spare me such praises, I entreat.

ÉLISE.

If I spare you I leave the half of what I think unsaid.

CLIMÈNE.

Ah! heavens! say no more; you cast me into unutterable confusion. (*To Uranie*) Now we are two against you, and obstinacy doth so ill become a clever woman that —

## SCENE FOURTH

THE MARQUIS, CLIMÈNE, URANIE, ÉLISE, GALOPIN

GALOPIN, *at the door.*

Stop, if you please, monsieur.

THE MARQUIS.

I presume you do not know me

GALOPIN.

Oh, yes, I know you; but you can't go in.

THE MARQUIS.

What nonsense is all this, you little lacquey.

GALOPIN.

It is n't right to enter in spite of people's wishes.

THE MARQUIS.

I wish to see your mistress.

GALOPIN.

She is not at home, I tell you.

THE MARQUIS.

But there she is; I see her in the room.

GALOPIN.

There she is, truly, but she is not at home.

URANIE.

What is all this?

THE MARQUIS.

Your lacquey, madame, who plays the fool.

GALOPIN.

I tell him that you are not at home, madame, but he insists on coming in.

URANIE.

Why did you tell monsieur that I was not at home?

GALOPIN.

You scolded me just now for having said you were.

URANIE.

Saucy fellow! I beg you, monsieur, to pay no heed to him. He is a giddy boy who took you for some one else.

THE MARQUIS.

So I supposed, madame; and but for your presence I should have taught him to know a man of quality.

ÉLISE.

My cousin is greatly obliged for that forbearance.

URANIE, *to Galopin.*

A chair, at once, impertinent boy.

GALOPIN.

There 's one.

URANIE.

Bring it nearer.

(*Galopin pushes the chair roughly and goes out.*)

## SCENE FIFTH

THE MARQUIS, CLIMÈNE, URANIE, ÉLISE

THE MARQUIS.

Your little lacquey, madame, is contemptuous of my person.

ÉLISE.

He is very wrong, no doubt.

THE MARQUIS, *adjusting his collar.*

Perhaps I 'm paying interest on my poor *stock* — ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

ÉLISE.

Age will enlighten him as to people's merits.

THE MARQUIS.

What were you talking of, ladies, when I entered ?

URANIE.

Of the new comedy, " The School for Wives."

THE MARQUIS.

I have just come from there.

CLIMÈNE.

Well, monsieur, what think you of it, if you please ?

THE MARQUIS.

Most impertinent.

CLIMÈNE.

Ah! I am delighted.

THE MARQUIS.

The most disgusting thing in the world. The devil! I could scarcely get a place. I was almost smothered at the door, and everybody trod upon my toes. Just see how shockingly my ruffles and my ribbons have been crushed.

ÉLISE.

Yes, they cry vengeance on "The School for Wives;" you condemn that comedy with justice.

THE MARQUIS.

A more wretched comedy, I think, was never made.

URANIE.

Ah! here comes Dorante, for whom we are waiting.

## SCENE SIXTH

DORANTE, CLIMÈNE, URANIE, ÉLISE, THE MARQUIS

DORANTE.

Don't move, I beg of you; go on with what you were saying. You are talking of a matter

which for the last four days has been the topic of every house in Paris. Nothing was ever more amusing than the diversity of the judgments expressed upon it. I have heard certain persons condemn that comedy for the very things that others value most.

URANIE.

Here is the marquis saying all sorts of evil of it.

THE MARQUIS.

Yes, truly. I think it detestable; *morbleu!* de-test-a-ble; most detestable.

DORANTE.

And I, dear marquis, think that judgment of yours detestable.

THE MARQUIS.

What! chevalier, do you pretend to support that play?

DORANTE.

Yes, undoubtedly, I do intend to support it.

THE MARQUIS.

*Parbleu!* I swear it is detestable.

DORANTE.

But, marquis, for what reason is it what you say?

The Marquis.

Why it is detestable?

Dorante.

Yes.

The Marquis.

It is detestable because it *is* detestable.

Dorante.

After that, of course, there 's nothing to be said; the verdict 's rendered. But still, you might instruct us, and show us the defects.

The Marquis.

How should I know them? I did not even take the trouble to listen. But I know, God save me, I never saw a play that was half so bad, and Dorillas, with whom I went, agreed with me.

Dorante.

A fine authority! You are well sustained!

The Marquis.

It was enough to hear the laughter in the pit; I don't want other proof the play was worthless.

Dorante.

Ah! you belong to those young stylish fellows who deny the pit has common-sense, and

are ashamed to laugh with it, even though the play were the best in the world. I saw a friend of ours the other night, who made himself ridiculous in just that way. He listened throughout the piece with a gloomy air, and frowned at all that made the others gay. At every burst of laughter he shrugged his shoulders and looked at the pit with scorn; sometimes his glance was spiteful, and he said aloud: "Oh! *you* can laugh, you pit!" He was a second comedy himself, poor man; and he performed it for the whole assembly, who all agreed it could not have been better played. Learn, marquis, I implore you (and others too), that judgment and good sense have no exclusive place in theatres. Standing or seated, men may have poor opinions, but, as a general thing, I'd rather trust the approbation of the pit; for the reason, that among those who fill it are many who are capable of judging a play by rules of art, and others who judge by the best method of judging, which is by its effect on them, — not by blind prejudice, or silly complaisance, or foolish prudery.

THE MARQUIS.

So you defend the pit, chevalier? *Parbleu!* I am delighted; I will not fail to let it know your friendship, ha! ha! ha!

Dorante.

Laugh if you like. I 'm for good sense where'er I meet it; I cannot stand the frothy brains of our Mascarille marquises. It makes me furious to see such men, in spite of their quality, prove themselves ridiculous; men who give opinions and boldly talk of things about which they know nothing; applauding at a play the poorest parts and ignorant of the good ones; when they see a picture or listen to a concert, praise and blame in the wrong places, and seize the terms of art only to misapply them. Hey ! *morbleu*, messieurs, hold your tongues, I want to say to them. If God has not bestowed the knowledge of a thing upon you, don't make yourself a laughing-stock by talking of it. Reflect that if you do not talk the world, perhaps, may think you clever.

The Marquis.

*Parbleu!* chevalier, you are —

Dorante.

'T is not to you I 'm speaking, marquis; 't is to a dozen of those young seigneurs who dishonor other courtiers by their foolish manners, and make the people think that we are all

alike. As for me, I vindicate myself as often as I can; I jeer them and their folly wherever I encounter them, hoping perhaps to make them wiser.

THE MARQUIS.

Tell me, chevalier, do you think Lysandre has wit?

DORANTE.

Yes, no doubt; and a great deal of it.

URANIE.

That is a thing that no one could deny.

THE MARQUIS.

Then ask him what *he* thinks of "The School for Wives;" you'll find he'll tell you that he does not like it.

DORANTE.

Well, there are many men whom too much wit has spoiled; they see things falsely from mere force of light; and sometimes they dislike to share the ideas of others, in order to have the credit of deciding all themselves.

URANIE.

Yes, that is true. Our friend is of that class no doubt. He wants to be the first of his opinion, and have his verdict waited with respect.

All approbation which precedes his own is an attack on his intelligence, for which he takes revenge by contrary opinion. He wishes to be consulted on matters of the intellect, and I am certain that had our author shown him that comedy before he let the public see it, Lysandre would have thought it the finest ever written.

The Marquis, *to Dorante.*

What will you say to the Marquise Araminti, who everywhere declares it is most dreadful, and says she cannot bear the nastiness of which 't is full.

Dorante.

I say that such a speech is worthy of the character she takes. There are many persons who make themselves ridiculous by assuming to have too much virtue. Though she is clever, certainly, she follows the bad example of those women who, as their years advance, strive to replace the thing they see they 've lost by something else, and so imagine that the grimaces of a squeamish prudery will take the place of youth and beauty. The marquise pushes that idea farther than most; and her qualms of decency discover nastiness where others see it not. Those qualms, they say, have gone so far

as even to distort the language; and there are scarcely any words from which this austere lady does not lop the heads or tails because she thinks those syllables indecent.

URANIE.

Chevalier, you are savage!

THE MARQUIS.

In fact, chevalier, you defend your comedy by satirizing those who blame it.

DORANTE.

Not so. But I do say that lady takes offence at nothing.

ÉLISE.

Gently, chevalier! there may be others present who share those sentiments.

DORANTE.

I am sure that *you* do not, at any rate; for when you saw that play performed — .

ÉLISE.

Quite true; but I have changed my mind. (*Motioning to Climène*) Madame supports the opposite opinion with such convincing reasons that she has drawn me over to her side.

Dorante, *to Climène.*

Ah! madame, I beg your pardon; and, if you choose, I will unsay, for love of you, all I have said.

Climène.

I do not wish it done for love of me, but for love of reason; for really, this play, to take it at its best, is indefensible, and I can't conceive —

Uranie.

Ah! here comes Lysidas, the writer. His arrival is most timely. Monsieur Lysidas, pray take a chair and sit you there.

## SCENE SEVENTH

Lysidas, Climène, Uranie, Élise, Dorante, The Marquis

Lysidas.

Madame, I have come a little late, but I was forced to read my play in the salon of that marquise of whom I told you, and the praises there bestowed upon it kept me a full hour longer than I expected.

Élise.

Praises have spells to hold an author.

Uranie.

Be seated, Monsieur Lysidas; we 'll hear your play when we have taken supper.

Lysidas.

Those who were present have all agreed to attend the first performance; they promised me to do their duty properly.

Uranie.

I can believe it. But now sit down, I beg of you. We are talking on a subject that I desire to continue.

Lysidas.

I presume, madame, that you will take a box on that occasion?

Uranie.

I 'll see about it. Allow us to continue now what we were saying.

Lysidas.

I warn you, madame, that they are mostly taken.

Uranie.

Very good. I really needed you when you came in, for every one here present is against me.

Élise.

No, Dorante was at first on your side; but since he knows that madame (*motioning to Climène*) leads the opposite party, I fear you must indeed seek other help.

Climène.

No, no; I will not have him court your cousin so ill; and I permit his mind to go where his heart is.

Dorante.

With that permission, madame, I shall make bold to defend my views.

Uranie.

But first, I wish to hear the sentiments of Monsieur Lysidas.

Lysidas.

On what, madame?

Uranie.

On this new play, "The School for Wives."

Lysidas.

Ah! ah!

Uranie.

What do you think of it?

LYSIDAS.

I have nothing to say of it. You know that authors should always speak with circumspection of one another's works.

DORANTE.

But still, between ourselves, what think you of that comedy?

LYSIDAS.

I, monsieur?

URANIE.

Come, in confidence, give us your opinion.

LYSIDAS.

I think it very fine.

DORANTE.

What! really?

LYSIDAS.

Undoubtedly. Why not? It is, in fact, the finest of all plays.

DORANTE.

Ho, ho! malicious demon, you are not saying what you think.

LYSIDAS.

Pardon me —

DORANTE.

Heavens! I know you; don't dissimulate.

LYSIDAS.

I, monsieur!

DORANTE.

'T is plain to see your praises of that play are mere civility, and in your heart you agree with those who think it bad.

LYSIDAS.

Ha, ha, ha!

DORANTE.

Come, own it is a poor affair, this comedy.

LYSIDAS.

'T is true that connoisseurs do not approve it.

THE MARQUIS.

I' faith, chevalier, now you have caught it! You are well paid off for all your satire. Ha, ha, ha!

DORANTE.

Laugh on, dear marquis, laugh away!

THE MARQUIS.

You see we have the *savants* on our side.

DORANTE.

True. The judgment of Monsieur Lysidas is much to be considered. But Monsieur Lysidas must permit me not to yield on that account;

and since I have the audacity to defend my side against the opinions of madame (*bowing to Climène*), he will not take it ill that I should combat his.

Élise.

What! when you see madame, the marquis, and Monsieur Lysidas against you, do you still dare resist? Fie, what bad grace!

Climène.

But what confounds me is that reasonable beings should take it into their heads to protect the follies of that play.

The Marquis.

God bless me! madame, it is abject from beginning to end.

Dorante.

That is soon said, marquis. Nothing is easier than to cut a matter short in that way; and I know nothing that is sheltered from the tyranny of such dicta.

The Marquis.

*Parbleu!* the other comedians who were there to see it said all the harm in the world of it.

Dorante.

Ah! then I say no more: you are right, dear marquis. If the other comedians said harm of it, we must, assuredly, believe them. They are such enlightened people, and have no selfish motives in what they say. There 's nothing further to be said, and I surrender.

Climène.

Surrender, or not, as you please, I know one thing: I shall never be persuaded to endure the immodesty of that comedy, nor the insulting satire that it casts on women.

Uranie.

Well, as for me, I am not insulted by it; I do not take to my account all that is said. Such satire falls upon our manners and customs; it strikes at persons only by the way. Let us not fix upon ourselves the shafts of a general censure; we may profit by the lesson if we can, but not behave as though 't were meant for us. All those ridiculous pictures which the stage presents should be regarded without prejudice by every one. They are public mirrors, in which we never ought to show we see ourselves; to be so scandalized at such reproofs is openly confessing our defects.

Climène.

I do not speak of these things as if I had a part in them. I live in the world in such a style that I need not fear to be depicted among those women who are ill-behaved.

Élise.

Assuredly, madame, you never will be sought in that direction. Your conduct is well-known; 't is of a kind that nobody disputes.

Uranie, *to Climène.*

And nothing I have said, madame, applies to you: my speeches, like the satire of the comedy, remain in generalities.

Climène.

I do not doubt it, madame. But let us quit this topic — I am not aware how you receive the insults offered to our sex in certain portions of that play, but for myself I own that I am furiously angry when its impertinent author calls us "animals."

Uranie.

But do you not see that he makes a ridiculous person say so?

Dorante.

Besides, madame, you surely know that a lover's insults are not insulting. Some loves

are vehement, others gentle; and there are times when the strangest words, and something worse, are taken by the ladies who receive them as proofs of strong affection.

Élise.

Say what you please, I never can digest that speech, nor the "soup," nor the "cream-tarts" madame mentioned.

The Marquis.

Faith! yes, *cream-tarts!* I noticed that; "cream-tarts"! I thank you, madame, for reminding me of those "cream-tarts." Are there apples enough in Normandy to pelt "cream-tarts"? "Cream-tarts," *morbleu!* "cream-tarts"!

Dorante.

Well, cream-tarts; what then?

The Marquis.

*Parbleu! cream-tarts*, chevalier.

Dorante.

Yes, what of them?

The Marquis.

*Cream-tarts!*

Dorante.

Give us your reasons.

The Marquis.

Why, *cream-tarts!*

Uranie.

But people should explain their thoughts, it seems to me.

The Marquis.

*Cream-tarts*, madame!

Uranie.

What do you find to say against them?

The Marquis.

I? — *cream-tarts!*

Uranie.

Oh! I give up.

Élise.

Monsieur le marquis has the best of it and foils you finely. But I could wish that Monsieur Lysidas would take those cream-tarts up and give them a few pats after his fashion.

Lysidas.

'T is not my custom to find fault; I am known to be indulgent to the work of others. Still, without offending the regard which Monsieur le chevalier exhibits for the author, I must acknowledge that comedies of this sort are not real

comedies; there is a mighty difference between such trifles and the beauties of a serious play. Yet all the world in these days is taken in by them! society runs after them, and after nothing else! Noble works are left in frightful solitude, while flimsy folly rules all Paris. I own to you that often my heart bleeds; it is a shame to France.

CLIMÈNE.

The public taste is strangely spoilt of late; our present age is horribly given to *s'encanailler*.

ÉLISE.

*S'encanailler!* why, there 's another pretty word. Did you invent it, madame?

CLIMÈNE.

Eh — er —

ÉLISE.

I thought as much.

DORANTE.

So you think, Monsieur Lysidas, that intellect and beauty are only to be found in serious poems, and that comic plays are silly trifles which deserve no praise?

URANIE.

Those are not my sentiments, at any rate.

Tragedy, no doubt, is something grand when it is rightly handled; but comedy has many charms; and I think 't is no less difficult to write than tragedy.

DORANTE.

You are right, madame; and as for difficulty, you would not be wrong if you should add a little to the scale of comedy. I think myself 't is easier to be grand over grand sentiments, brave adverse fortune, challenge destiny, and hurl defiance at the gods than to exhibit in a proper spirit the absurdities of men and show their failings pleasantly upon the stage. When you depict a hero you can make him what you choose. Such portraits follow fancy, and no one seeks resemblance; you trust the pinions of imagination, which often soars from truth to attain the marvellous. But when you picture men you must paint from nature. Those portraits must be likenesses; and if you do not make them recognized as the men and women of our day you have done nought. In a word, it is enough in serious works to say sound things in choicely written language; but in comedy we must be comic; and 't is indeed a curious enterprise to make the honest public laugh.

Climène.

I count myself among that honest public, and I could not find one word to laugh at in that comedy.

The Marquis.

Nor I, upon my word.

Dorante.

As for you, marquis, I am not surprised; you found no puns to please you.

Lysidas.

And what there is to find is scarcely better; the jokes, I thought, were very dry.

Dorante.

The court thought otherwise.

Lysidas.

Oh, monsieur! the court indeed!

Dorante.

Continue, Monsieur Lysidas; I see you long to say the court knows nothing of such matters. The usual refuge of all authors when their works do not succeed is to blame the injustice of the age and the dull intellect of courtiers. But let me tell you, Monsieur Lysidas, that courtiers have eyes as good as others; a man may be in-

telligent in Venice point and plumes as well as in a bob-tail wig and muslin collar; and the great test of all your comedies is the court judgment. 'T is the court taste you ought to study to find the art of pleasing; there 's no tribunal where the decisions are so just. Without considering the many men of intellect who belong to it, the simple, natural good sense and manners of the great world form a habit of mind which, without comparison, judges with greater delicacy than all the rusty wisdom of the pedants.

Uranie.

It is very true that, however little one may live at court, so many things pass daily before our eyes that we acquire a certain habit of judging, especially of all relating to good or evil pleasantry.

Dorante.

That the court has some absurdities I readily admit, for I have been, as you well know, the first to laugh at them. But, faith! there 's plenty of that sort of thing among the most noted *beaux esprits*, and if we sometimes laugh at marquises there is greater reason still to show up authors. 'T would be a most amusing thing to put upon the stage their learned humbug,

their finical absurdities, their vicious custom of stabbing others through their works, their greediness of praise, their compromise with thoughts, their traffic in reputation, their leagues, offensive and defensive, as well as their wars of mind and their battles of prose and verse.

Lysidas.

Molière is lucky, monsieur, to have so warm a patron as yourself. But still, to come to facts, the question is whether his play is good, and I'll engage to show you at least a hundred visible defects.

Uranie.

'T is a strange thing that all you poets condemn the plays that people rush to see, and say no good of any but of those that no one cares for. To the first you show a hatred quite invincible, to the others a tenderness that's almost inconceivable.

Dorante.

Because he is generous and takes the side of all neglected persons.

Uranie.

But Monsieur Lysidas, I beg of you, show us those defects which I have been unable to perceive.

LYSIDAS.

Those who know Aristotle and Horace, madame, can see at once that Molière's comedy transgresses all the rules of art.

URANIE.

I own I am not intimate with the gentlemen you name, and I know nothing of the rules of art.

DORANTE.

You *savants* are so amusing with your "rules of art," by which you puzzle ignorant people and stun us daily. To hear you talk, one would really think those "rules of art" were mysteries; whereas they are only simple observations, made by common-sense, on things that may affect the pleasure people take in poems of that sort. And the same good sense which made these observations in the olden time makes them as easily in our day, without the help of Horace or of Aristotle. I would like to ask if the great rule of rules is not — *to please;* and if a play which attains that end upon the stage is not upon the high-road of good art. Do you think the public is mistaken in such matters? or that each member cannot judge of the pleasure he receives?

URANIE.

I have remarked one thing in authors; those who talk most of rules, and know them best, write comedies that no one considers beautiful or goes to see.

DORANTE.

A fact which shows us, madame, we need not pay attention to such abstruse disputes. For, after all, if plays that follow rules don't please, and those that please don't follow rules, the reason must be, of necessity, the rules are bad. 'T is best to laugh at all such quibbling criticism, to which these writers seek to subject the public taste. Let us enjoy in simple faith the things that please our inmost souls, and seek no arguments to spoil our pleasure.

URANIE.

For my part, when I see a comedy I care for nothing but the effect it has on me. If it amuses me I do not ask if I am wrong, and whether the rules of Aristotle forbid my laughing.

DORANTE.

Like the man who, finding a sauce good, does not examine to see if it follows precisely the receipt in the "Frenchman's Cook-book."

URANIE.

True. I wonder often at the hypercriticism of certain persons on matters about which we ought to *feel* within us.

DORANTE.

You are right, madame, to think such finical refinements strange. If they prevailed we could have no belief in our own selves; our very senses would be slaves; even to eating and drinking we should not dare to think things good without the sanction of milord the expert.

LYSIDAS.

In short, chevalier, your only reason for liking "The School for Wives" is that it pleases; you do not mind its violating rules, because —

DORANTE.

Stop, Monsieur Lysidas; I cannot grant you that. I said, indeed, that the great rule of art was to know how to please; and that this comedy, having pleased the public for whom the author wrote it, I thought he need not care for all the rest. But, further than that. I do maintain it does not violate the rules you mention. I have read them all, thank God, as often as any one, and I could show you, easily, we

have no comedy upon the stage more regulated by those rules than this one.

ÉLISE.

Courage, Monsieur Lysidas; we are lost if you retreat.

LYSIDAS.

But monsieur! consider the protasis, the epitasis, the katastrophe.

DORANTE.

Ha! Monsieur Lysidas, you are trying to crush me with grand words; but don't, for heaven's sake, assume such learning. Bring your discourse to earth and speak to be understood. Greek adds no weight to argument; and don't you think 't would be as fine to say: "the explanation of the subject" in place of the *protasis*, or "plot" for *epitasis*, and "the end" for the *katastrophe?*

LYSIDAS.

Those are terms of art which it is well to use. But since they wound your ears I will explain myself in other ways: and I request you to answer plainly certain questions which I wish to put. First: can a play be suffered to defy its very name? The words "dramatic poem" come from a Greek word signifying "to act," in

order to show that the nature of that poem consists of action. Now, in this comedy there is no action; it all consists of narratives, told either by Horace or by Agnes.

The Marquis.

Ha! ha! chevalier.

Climène.

Most wittily remarked; you have gone to the root of things in that.

Lysidas.

Was ever anything less witty, or rather I should say, more vulgar, than certain words at which the audience laughs; more especially those of "children by the ear"?

Climène.

Good, very good!

Élise.

Ha!

Lysidas.

That scene within the house between the valet and the maid, is it not tiresome, and far too long, and quite uncalled-for?

The Marquis.

True.

Climène.

Yes, true indeed!

Élise.

He is right.

Lysidas.

And does not Arnolphe give that money to Horace much too freely. Being, as he is, the ridiculous personage of the piece, he ought not to be made to do a handsome action.

The Marquis.

Good; that remark is good.

Climène.

Yes, admirable.

Élise.

Wonderful!

Lysidas.

Arnolphe's sermon and those maxims, are they not ridiculous, and even shocking to the respect we owe the Mysteries?

The Marquis.

Well said!

Climène.

You put it as you ought.

Élise.

Nothing could possibly be better.

Lysidas.

And this Monsieur de la Souche, who after all is really a man of intellect, and seems, in certain parts, most serious, does he not descend to something far too comic, too burlesque, in that fifth act, where he explains to Agnes the violence of his love with rolling eyes, and those ridiculous sighs and silly tears that make the audience laugh?

The Marquis,

*Morbleu!* you are marvellous.

Climène.

Miraculous!

Élise.

Vivat Monsieur Lysidas!

Lysidas.

I drop a thousand other points, lest I be wearisome.

The Marquis.

*Parbleu!* chevalier, you are worsted now.

Dorante.

That 's to be seen.

The Marquis.

You have found your match, i' faith.

Dorante.

Perhaps.

The Marquis.

But answer, answer, answer, answer.

Dorante.

Most willingly. It —

The Marquis.

Answer, I say.

Dorante.

Well, let me do so. If —

The Marquis.

*Parbleu!* I challenge you to make an answer.

Dorante.

I can't if you keep talking.

Climène.

Pray let us listen to his reasons.

Dorante.

In the first place, it is not true that all the play is narrative. Much action is performed upon the stage. The narratives themselves are actions, and follow the formation of the subject. They are all made naïvely, those narratives, to the person interested; who is thrown, as each is

told him, into a confusion that delights the audience, and takes his measures, which carry on the play, to avoid the evil that he fears.

URANIE.

I think the beauty of the play consists in these perpetual confidences; and what is most amusing, it seems to me, is that a man of Arnolphe's mind, warned by an innocent girl who is in his power, and by a giddy youth who is his rival, is yet unable to avoid the fate that overtakes him.

THE MARQUIS.

Nonsense, nonsense!

CLIMÈNE.

A feeble answer.

ÉLISE.

Wretched reasons!

DORANTE.

As to those "children by the ear," they are only droll, of course, as they relate to Arnolphe. The author did not put them there as wit, but solely to characterize the man and paint his folly by showing how he relates a trivial silliness of Agnes as a fine thing which gives him wondrous pleasure.

The Marquis.

That 's a bad answer.

Climène.

It does not satisfy me.

Élise.

There 's nothing in it.

Dorante.

As for money which he gives so liberally, besides the fact that the letter of his dearest friend was certainly security enough, it is not incompatible that a person who is ridiculous in many ways should be a worthy man in others. The scene between Alain and Georgette within the house, which some have thought too long, is surely not unnecessary; for Arnolphe, foiled by the innocence of his mistress and kept at his door by the ignorance of his servants, receives his punishment on all sides through the very means he took to make himself secure.

The Marquis.

Such arguments amount to nothing.

Climène.

They are all mere whitewash.

Élise.

And most pitiable!

DORANTE.

As for the moral lecture, which you call a sermon, truly pious persons who have heard it found nothing there to shock them, as you say. "Hell" and the "boiling caldrons" they thought justified by Arnolphe's raving passion and by the ignorance of her to whom he spoke. As for the lover's transport in the last act, which you accuse of being too comic and grotesque, I would like to ask if lovers are not fair game, and whether worthy persons, even solemn ones, do not on such occasions do things —

THE MARQUIS.

Upon my word, chevalier, you had better hold your tongue.

DORANTE.

Well, well; but if we look at home when we are much in love —

THE MARQUIS.

I will not even listen to you.

DORANTE.

Listen you must. I say that in the violence of passion —

THE MARQUIS, *sings*.

La la, la, la la-ré la, la, la, la, la !

DORANTE.

What?

THE MARQUIS.

La, la, la, la, la-ré, la, la, la, la, la!

DORANTE.

I don't know whether —

THE MARQUIS.

La, la, la, la, la-ré, la, la, la, la, la!

URANIE.

It seems to me that —

THE MARQUIS.

La, la, la, la, la-ré, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!

URANIE.

Our dispute is certainly amusing; I think 't would make a little comedy that would not come amiss as an appendix to "The School for Wives."

DORANTE.

You are right.

THE MARQUIS.

*Parbleu!* chevalier, you would play a part but little to your credit.

DORANTE.

A true part, marquis.

Climène.

As for me, I should like to have it done, provided the affair were told just as it happened.

Élise.

I'll furnish my particular rôle with all my heart.

Lysidas.

Mine I shall not refuse, I think.

Uranie.

As we are all so well content, make notes, chevalier, of the whole affair, and carry them to Molière, whom you know, and tell him to put them in a comedy.

Climène.

He will not consent to that, of course, as these are not verses in his honor.

Uranie.

You are mistaken. I know his humor. He does not care who blames his play, provided always that they go to see it.

Dorante.

Yes, but what finale can we give to this affair? There is neither a marriage nor yet a recognition; in fact I see no way to make a fitting end to this dispute.

Uranie.

We must reflect, and find some incident.

(*Enter Galopin.*)

Galopin.

Madame is served.

Dorante.

Ha ! here 's precisely the conclusion that we want; nothing could be more natural. They shall dispute on both sides, hard and firm, as we have done; no one shall yield; a little lacquey shall come in and say that madame is served; then all shall rise and go to supper.

Uranie.

No better ending could be found; we shall do well to make it ours.

END OF LA CRITIQUE DE L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES.

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